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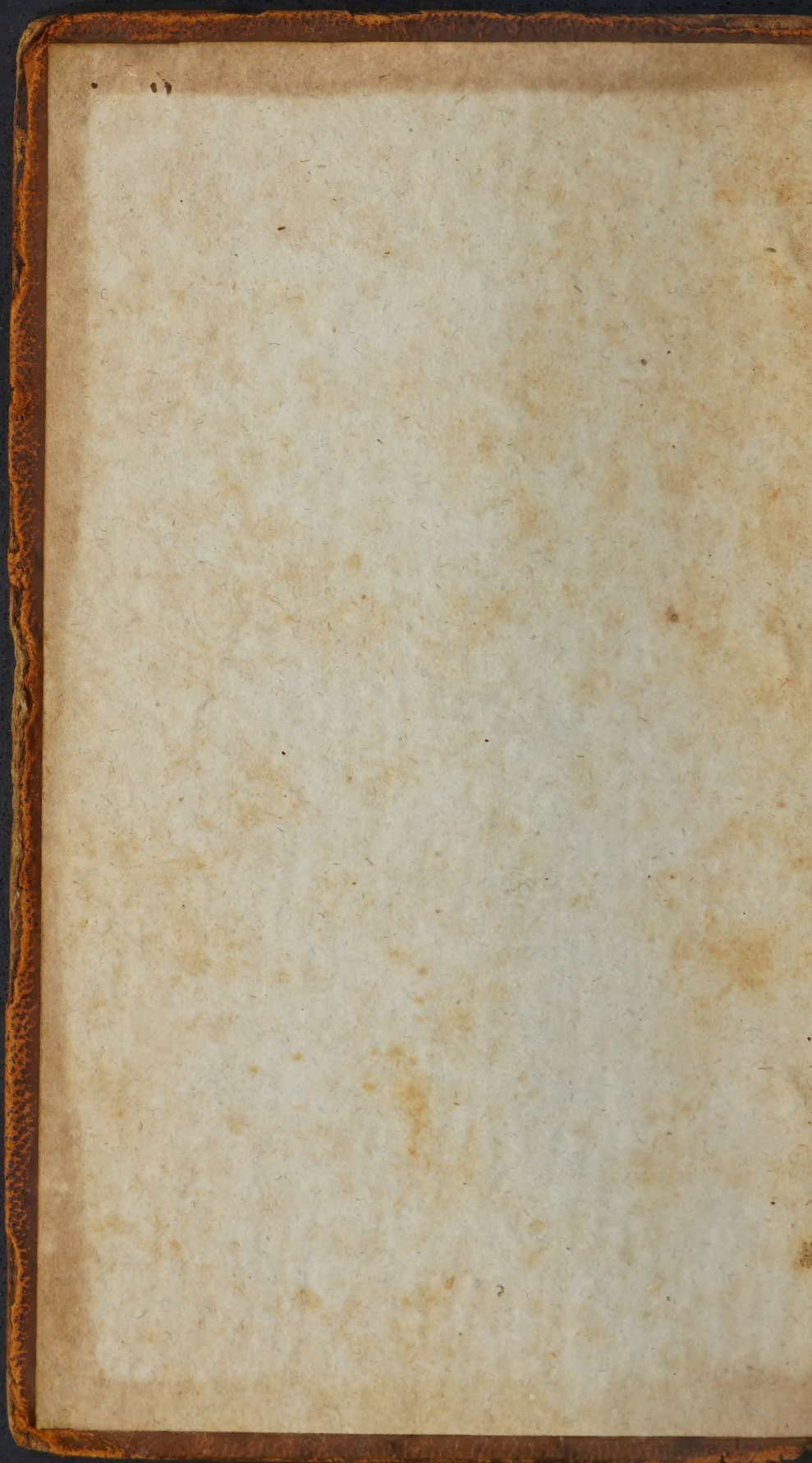
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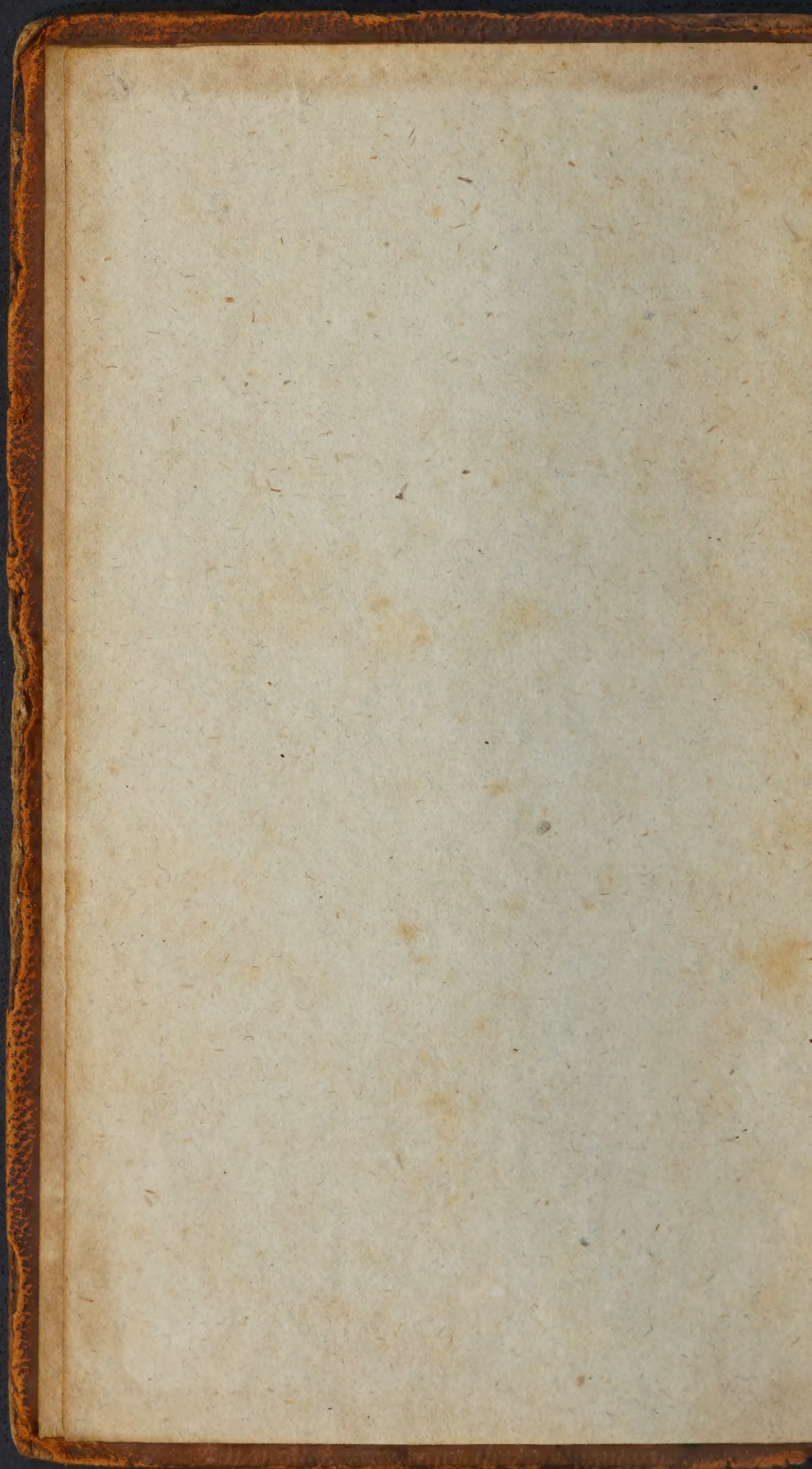


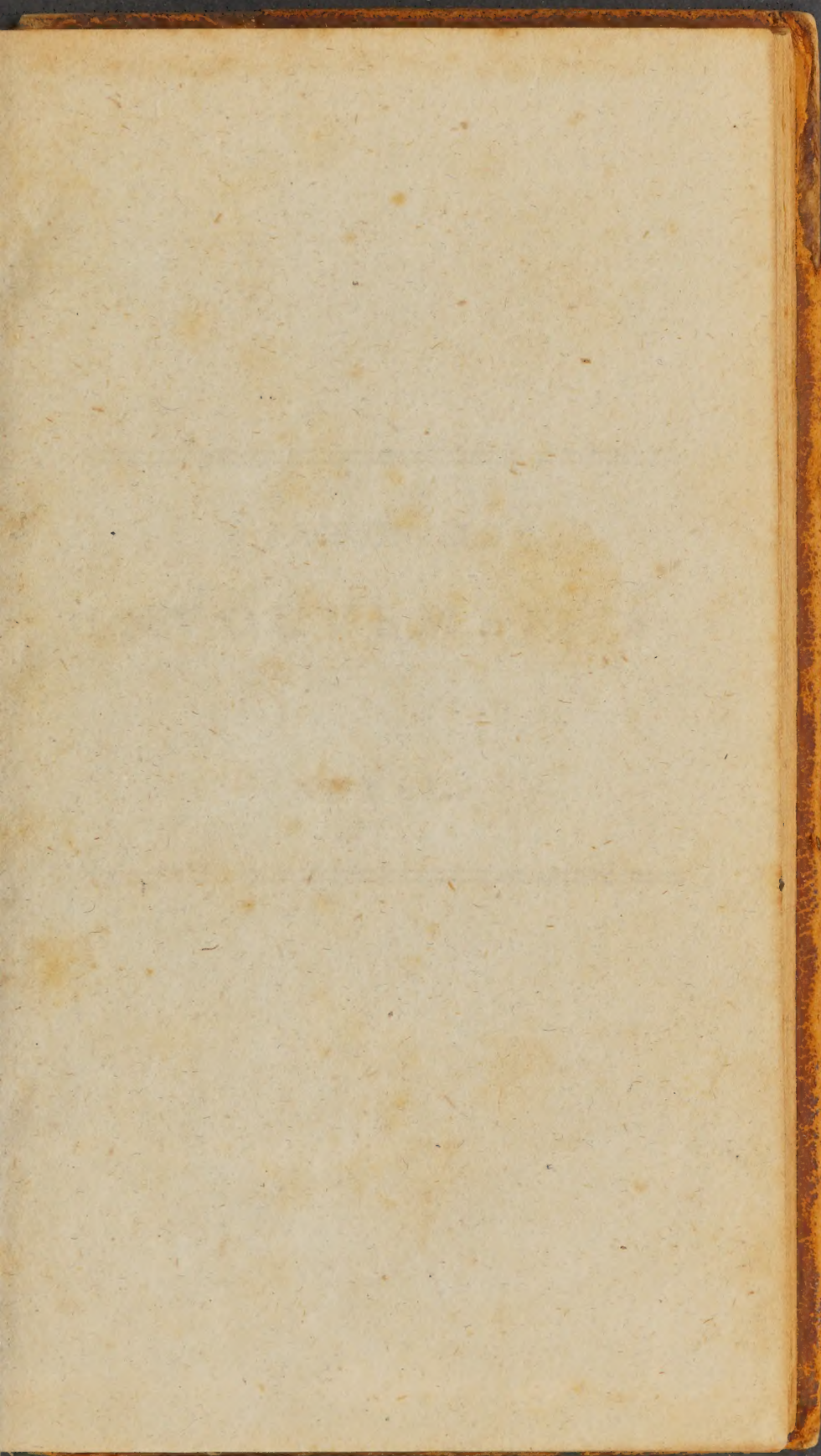


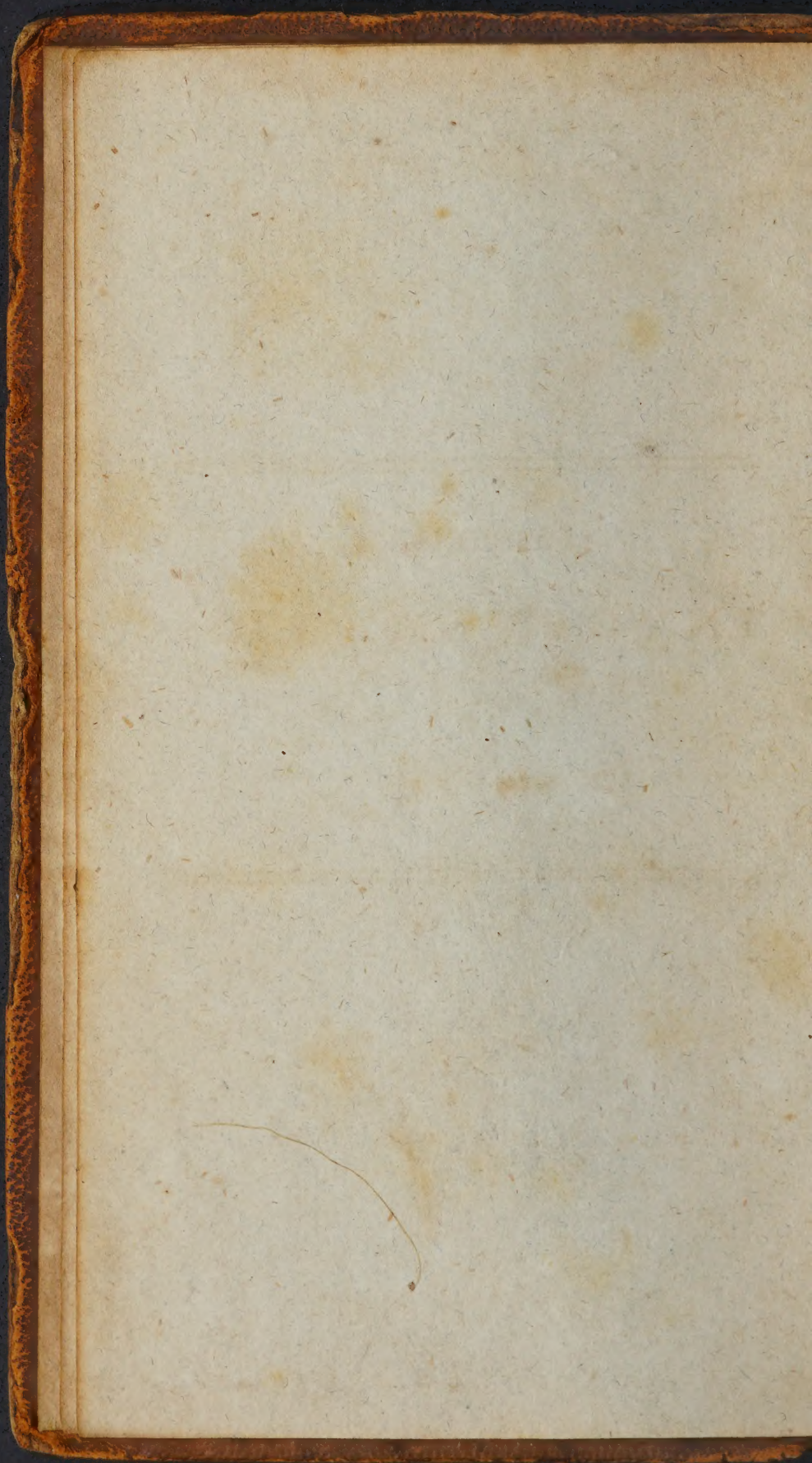


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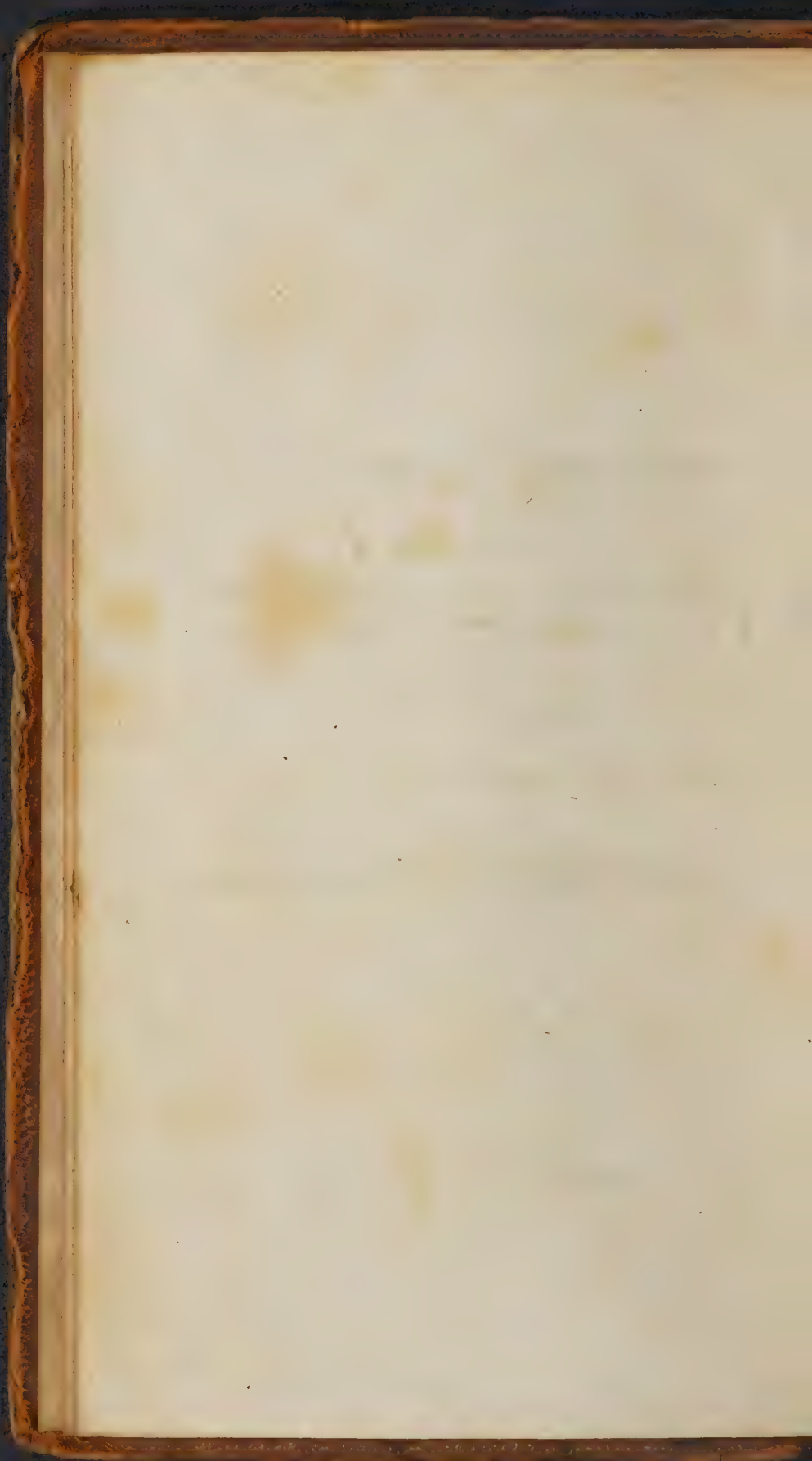
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FASHIONABLE
INVOLVEMENTS:
A
NOVEL.



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INVOLVEMENTS:

A
NOVEL.

BY
MRS. GUNNING

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

D U B L I N:

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AND G. FOLINGBY.

1800.



Fashionable Involvements.

CHAP. I.

TETE-A-TETE.

THE most fashionable couple about town being prevented from sleeping by some domestic crotchets running in their heads, of which they wished to divest themselves, accidentally met in the breakfast-room at an unusual early hour, it being not one o'clock. Yes, Reader, it was really no more than one hour after mid-day! No wonder then they should start at the sight of each other as if they had seen a spectre, as they issued from their separate apartments; but politeness very soon obtained a complete victory over surprize; all the enquiries possible were mutually made with such perfect good breeding, as shewed they wanted nothing in the world but sincerity to make them pass for affectionate solicitude.

Lady

Lady Isleworth carried a smile on her face and a scroll of paper in her hand, which laying carelessly on the table, she prepared to fill out the tea.

Sir Frederick took up a newspaper, but his eyes often reverted with a glance of suspicion towards the manuscript he saw lying by the side of his lady, the subject of which he probably guessed, therefore asked no questions, but said, in a dissatisfied tone, "Where are the girls?— I am surprized, Lady Isleworth, *you* give yourself the trouble of doing these sort of dull offices, when you have so many daughters who may take them off your hands."

"O, my dear," returned her Ladyship, "you have surely forgot that we have none of them at home, except the two young ones, who I suppose, are at their lessons; and Miss Isleworth did not go to bed till six this morning, of course we must not expect to see her till dinner time: I wish the poor thing may not be in a decline; she looks frightfully pale; and as soon as the town thins, it will be proper, I think, to send her into the country, that she may get up her sleep, and by that means recover her complexion."

"But, if you suppose the change of air so necessary to the restoration of her health, why wait
till

till the town thins? why not put your design in execution immediately."

"Oh! for Heaven's sake, do not mention such a proposition; it would absolutely kill her at once; yes, it would be her death; there is suffocation in the very thoughts of the country at this season of the year. You see she is yet capable of a *great* deal; she has not been in bed any night this three weeks, at the earliest hour, till three in the morning. I did not mean to alarm you by saying she looked pale; I hardly know how I came to make the observation, only that I think it odious to be without colour; if she would put on rouge there might be no occasion for her going into the country at all; but she is so refractory to my commands, when I bid her try the experiment, that she positively *shall* go there one day or other, as she deserves to be punished for her disobedience."

The whole time her Ladyship had been delivering this maternal harangue, the half negligent, half oppressed Baronet, seemed to be more plunged in silent meditation, than devoting his attention either to the matter or the subject of her eloquence—a momentary pause ensued, when suddenly starting from his reverie, he cried out—

"Pray

“Pray, my dear, do you never intend to visit Mrs. Snug?”

“Mrs. *Snug*!” repeated his Lady, with a strongish sort of emphasis, “how, in the name of wonder, has her idea intruded on our family affairs?”

“Family affairs!—Oh, yes, true, child, we were talking of family affairs; and now that you have renewed the subject, I must tell you that they are in a d—d bad condition.”

“How can *that* be possible!—Do you really admire this grave sort of jesting?—For my part, I have not cleverness enough to understand it—however, do not let us dwindle into the *disagreeables*. You was talking of Mrs. Snug; she is a mighty pretty kind of woman; I wonder she has never been at any of my parties; for, indeed, and indeed, I sent my name and my days to her house, when you first hinted it to me that you had entered into a sort—of a sort—of a *friendly* intimacy with her husband.”

A smile of encouragement emboldened Sir Frederick to request the invitation might be repeated, being convinced that by some negligence or other her former compliment never reached the

the hand of Mrs. Snug, as he had heard her declare very lately there was *no* person in the world whose acquaintance she was so ambitious of attaining as that of Lady Isleworth.

CHAP. II.

TETE-A-TETE CONTINUED.

ANOTHER full pause, apparently important to both parties, immediately followed the Baronet's eager entreaties, and the Lady's *cheerful* acquiescence; yet this silence was not at last interrupted by any observation that seemed the effect of consideration.—“I am thinking,” said the former, “that you are a dear delightful creature, the most obliging wife in the universe; and what a loss the world *must* sustain, if my cursed involvements should force me to withdraw you from the participation of its elegant pleasures!”

“And I am thinking,” retorted his fairer and better half, “that you are enough to give one the vapours; I have to talk with you when

you get into a philosophical humour—Can't you let your involvements alone to disentangle themselves?—Did you ever know a man of six thousand a year that *does*, or *ought* to trouble himself about his involvements?"

"Faith, that is a rational conceit; but, nevertheless, I tell you Madam, we are ruined."

"Ruined with six thousand a year!—Pish! you are now perfectly provoking."

"Six thousand a year has a good sound, but when five of them are sunk in annuities can you tell me how a man is to make up the deficiency?"

"Lord, Sir Frederick! you talk very nonsensically; nothing is more easy! Why don't you get Arthur to cut off the entail? he is a fine spirited youth, and I dare say will do it with a great deal of pleasure."

"I shall certainly try him, my dear," said the Baronet: "but, in the mean time, would it not be *as well*, if you was to give up your jointure? I think that would help us a little."

"Take it then, by all means," replied her good-natured ladyship; "you have only to get
the

the consent of my trustees, and mine follows of course."

"What an angel!" exclaimed the transported husband, kissing her hands with well-affected rapture; "you have set the vessel right again; and there will be no immediate necessity of speaking to Arthur about the entail: we may keep that in reserve, at least until we can no longer contrive to go on without his assistance, I will see Bateman and Curry this very morning, and send them both to the devil, if they hesitate an instant in giving up their trust to your settlement."

"As to Curry," replied her ladyship, "it requires some address to manage that old fogram; you know, he took it into his head to be affronted when I forbid him the house, because the fool would give his advice unasked. However, I am glad to see your spirits getting above par. But remember, Sir Frederick, when my dirty acres are converted into cash, that *wives*, as well as *husbands*, have their little *fashionable* occasions. Here is a list," taking up the paper, which till now had remained quietly on the table, where she had laid it on her first entrance; "you had better look it over, my dear, and you will find the articles contained in these memorandums to
be

be mere *necessaries*, which I cannot *possibly* do without: the purchase of them, as near as I can guess, from expenditures of the same nature, will rather exceed fifteen hundred pounds, and a compliment of two thousand will leave me very much your debtor."

Now, as the necessaries of a lady of ton would not be universally understood by all classes of readers, though we were even to produce this list of memorandums, plainly as they were there made out, so we shall no more unfold the mystical paper that contained them than did Sir Frederick, who, returning it unopened, politely assured her ladyship, whatever part of the money she appropriated to her own use would receive a double value in his estimation.

Parting in the most undefinable harmony, they appointed to meet again half an hour before Lady Isleworth's company assembled, to talk over his success with her two trustees, though he appeared quite certain they could form no objection to an arrangement so well digested, and so *excessively* reasonable.

CHAP. III.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE.

LADY ISLEWORTH, at fourteen, was a romp—at fifteen, a wife—and at sixteen, a mother; which is all the apology we are at present inclined to make for having introduced her at the age of thirty-seven, the dissipated mistress of an almost ruined family. Her other qualifications will unfold themselves as occasion shall offer.

Sir Frederick could boast no greater advantage over his lady, but that of being in age four years her senior; of which preference, it may be so called, the incoherence of all his pursuits spoke him totally insensible. Whilst children themselves, they were the parents of children, which at first they considered merely as play-things; but afterwards, supposing them to be at least as rational as themselves, they were diligently initiated into all the wisdom of their wise parents, and as they grew up, no restrictions were laid either on their pleasures or expence; so that by the time Arthur, their eldest son, had escaped minority, the ready money fortune of fifty thousand pounds, brought by Lady Isleworth to her husband, had every shilling been squandered;
besides

besides that the *discreet* father, of this equally *discreet* son, having loaded his estates with annuities more than they could bear:—two jointures alone remained untouched, one of which was daily and anxiously expected to fall in, because it hung on the life of a very old woman. From the other sacred deposit Sir Frederick could form no reasonable expectations of present advantage, as it depended on the death of his own dear lady, who was even younger than himself.

Sir Frederick never found his difficulties so numerous and so pressing as at the opening of this history. He had promised a considerable loan to Mr. Snug, whose wife, as every good wife should do, took a very tender interest in all the concerns of her husband, and had herself condescended to solicit the loan. It was impossible the Baronet should refuse so fair a suitor, and yet it appeared ten times more impossible that he should ever be able to fulfil his liberal engagements.

How Lady Isleworth disposed of herself between the hours of parting from and meeting again with Sir Frederick, would be very little to the purpose; but her eagerness to know the result of his application to her trustees, must not be passed over in silence: her curiosity and anxiety

ty on this occasion was of so torturing a nature, that even the duties of her toilet were in a manner neglected—it might be said, that she rather suffered than enjoyed them; she would fix her eyes on her looking-glass, without admiring her charms, or even seeming to know that they were reflected before her; many of her ornaments were forgotten, and the rest ill-adjusted. Twenty times had she sent to enquire if Sir Frederick was come home, and a long train of repeated negatives served only to increase her large stock of discomposure.

When Lady Isleworth signified her apprehensions, that Mr. Curry would withhold his consent to the disposal of her jointure, on account of some offence which she acknowledged to have given him, she had other reasons, besides those she chose to advance, for more than *doubting* the success of her husband's negociation. Let us see, then, from what cause these hidden fears originated, and dig to the very root of that evil from whence sprung her ladyship's plentiful stock of impatience.

Mr. Ludlow, the father of Lady Isleworth, lived long enough for the advancement of his daughter, to see her the wife of Sir Frederick, and died soon enough to avoid being the witness
of

of her destruction. He was what is commonly called a *careful* parent, for he never would take a second wife. He accumulated a vast fortune by trade, one moiety of which he gave the Baronet on the day of marriage, and the other resigned two years after, when called upon to take his last journey; at which period he had acquired so much insight into their mutual passion for expence, that again he evinced himself the *careful* father, for he bequeathed the remaining fifty thousand that he left behind him to the sole disposal of his daughter, without cutting off his son-in-law from the use of the yearly interest this large sum may produce. He was also a *careful* father, when he united, for her settlement in trust, two gentlemen, who, in the whole course of their lives, he had never known to be united in the same opinion. Curry was in reality what Bateman only appeared to be: one was an honest man on *all* occasions; the other sometimes acted *like* an honest man, but not unless it would answer the purpose of his interest as well, or better, than playing the knave; and if we take this his real character for our clue, we shall find it the less difficult to develop the cause of certain mysterious transactions that we are going to lay before our readers, and which had for many years been passing between Bateman and his ward Lady Isleworth.

At

At various times, and on various emergencies, her ladyship had applied to this *Jew* Christian for certain sums of money; but the security Sir Frederick could not possibly join in, because he never was consulted on the business. Though small the sums, the frequency with which they were demanded, and the number of years they had been rolling on in a tide of accumulation, made them at length amount to something so considerable, that besides leaving in his rapacious hands all her valuable jewels, whilst they were cunningly copied in paste, of such exquisite workmanship as to defy the scrutiny of a husband's examination, this *wise* guardian insisted on *additional* security; and having nothing better to offer, the usurer accepted an obligation, properly executed to receive, on the death of Sir Frederick, double the consideration of the whole debt she had incurred; or in case she should not be the survivor, he took care, by a deed of gift that his foolish ward would reimburse his family at the same lavish rate, for his profusion of generosity in so freely administering to her extravagancies.

Thus situated, Lady Isleworth would certainly never have consented to Sir Frederick's application, but for fear her refusal might occasion certain questions, which might lead to certain
expla-

explanations, by no means desirable. She therefore submitted with a good grace, flattering herself with this only consolation, that Bateman, for his own sake, would not betray the engagements into which she had entered. But, alas! whatever satisfaction might have been reaped from her safety in respect to the fear of detection, met with a counterpoise, in the fuller certainty, that for his *own* sake also, Bateman would never be prevailed upon to relinquish his trust. On the one hand she was assailed by shame, yet shame was not the most terrible of her enemies; for on the other a fiend still more ugly presented itself—the spectre of solitude was a thousand times less tolerable.

Until this morning, her ladyship had been so busy in deranging her own affairs, that it is little to be wondered at if she had never troubled herself about what belonged to the affairs of her husband. This was really the case: for when told that morning they were in a bad condition, she was surprised; but the threat which accompanied the discovery, of dragging her from a town residence, added terror to surprise; and at a moment so peculiar, she would willingly have sacrificed every obstacle which stood in the way of Sir Frederick's views on that part of her fortune her father had so prudently locked up; there.

there was no penance she would not have performed, to avoid the bitterest of all calamities, that of being forced to exchange the dear distraction of a town life for a dull, sleepy, country retirement. Her pin-money, it must here be confessed, was very rich in arrears, which had been a sort of stumbling-block in her road to pleasure. Whenever she applied to the steward, he would gravely refer her ladyship to his master, who would as gravely, though not so respectfully, refer her to the devil. Now, whether it was that she did not like to put him out of humour, or that Mr. Bateman's supplies saved her from the necessity of reiterated importunities, certain it is, that for many years she had left off speaking to Sir Frederick on the subject, till debts of all descriptions, particularly those of *honour*, forced her to resolve on breaking silence, and setting out her claims.— Thus determined, with a scroll of paper in her hand, on which was sketched an exact measure of all her demands, and full of confidence in his capability of discharging them, we have seen her meet him at the breakfast table, where, having also witnessed whatever passed between them on that interview, we proceed to another of no less importance.

CHAP. IV.

MORE FAMILY AFFAIRS.

TWENTY and nine times had Lady Isleworth sent Harris, her woman, to enquire if Sir Frederick was returned : but before the thirtieth could be dispatched, her heart palpitated at receiving an invitation from himself, to meet him in one of the inner drawing-rooms.

When the message was brought up, Mrs. Harris was in the act of spreading over her lady's shoulders a profusion of long light hair, hanging from a well turned head, the chief merit of which consisted in the cultivation of this captivating ornament. Instantaneously she broke from the hands of her Abigail, and immediately took her giddy girlish flight down stairs, but, turning about before she reached the bottom, she stopped, and called out for Harris ; " Go," said she, " and tell Miss Isleworth, she is not to expect I shall carry my indulgence to such preposterous lengths, as to let her mope away all the evening in her chamber, whilst I am killing myself with fatigue in forming little foolish parties at whist
and

and cribbage—say it is her *duty* to ease me of this unprofitable trouble. Do you hear me, Harris?”

“Yes, my lady.”

“And tell her, my faro will not set late to-night; or if it should, and her head continues to ache, so that she *cannot* keep out of her bed, I shall dismiss her before it breaks up.” She stayed to say no more, but hurried on to meet her husband, trying, as she passed along, to fortify her spirits against the *very* worst that might happen: a precaution by no means unnecessary. Had she not been armed to encounter disappointment, the first glance she caught of Sir Frederick must have conquered all that yet remained unconquered of hope and expectation.

He was sitting on the edge of a card-table, his looks vacant and sullen; he was also whistling a certain doleful air, which his lady had often observed he never attempted, but on the strongest fits of sulkeness or passion; one of the packs of cards that lay on the table, he was trying to turn to his amusement, by tossing it up with his right hand and catching it again with his left, a sort of manual exercise which he managed so adroitly, that with safety he might have taken a bet to any amount, that he would not throw out one
turn

turn in a thousand, had any man, with spirit equal to his own, offered him the temptation; but, alas! had he looked round for such a *bon vivant*, he would have seen only his *wife* standing before him, who, with the best inclinations for gaming, had nothing to lose.

Her ladyship paused for a moment, contemplating, with a mixture of surprise and pleasure, the velocity and truth of his throws, seeming to lose, in admiration of his dexterity, all solid considerations; till, roused from the transient raptures of forgetfulness, by seeing him dash the cards from one end of the room to the other, and hearing him crying out in a voice of thunder, "What the devil made you send me on a fool's errand?"

"A fool's errand!" she retorted, with some warmth, "why surely, my dear, you went on your *own* errand; you wished to make the application—I gave my consent, and devoutly wished you success; therefore, if you have failed in obtaining it, the fault you know cannot be *mine*, our unlucky stars are alone to blame; and indeed I do think of late we have been mighty unfortunate."

"This is fine talking, Lady Isleworth; but it will not do—it will not blind me to the confounded arts of your sex. You have *certainly* entered

entered into a conspiracy with that rascal Bateman; or why, at the first mention of the affair, did he bluntly tell me you never *did*, would, or could expect *his* sanction to *so* absurd a proposition? Zounds, Madam! how would he have dared to use me thus, if, by some private means, you had not put him on his guard, and encouraged his insolence?"

Lady Isleworth felt herself blameless of the accusation laid to her charge. She well enough understood in what manner to construe Bateman's firm rejection of her husband's proposal; it was no more than she expected; but, conscious of no *new* duplicity, and satisfied that what she formerly practised had not transpired, she very soon convinced Sir Frederick of the fallacy on which his suspicions were founded, she offered to go the next day, to try what her own interest would do with this stubborn guardian; upon which he begged her pardon, and confessed himself ashamed that he had ever doubted her sincerity.

Domestic harmony was thus restored to its usual standard. But the Baronet's vivacity continuing rather below par, his amiable moiety exerted all her infantine playfulness to conjure away his spleen;—she talked of Mrs. Snug, of sup-
pers

pers, of dinners, of operas, plays, masquerades, of every thing but their *own* necessities; in short, she accommodated her subjects so well to his humour, that it is probable he might have buried, at least for that night, the remembrance of all his disappointments, if the mention of Mrs. Snug had not kept them swimming on the surface of his memory—to Mrs. Snug he had promised five hundred pounds, and in the present situation of affairs he might as well have promised her five hundred millions.

In the midst of her ladyship's incessant efforts to please and amuse him, he started on his legs, and turning three times round upon his heel with the grace of a Vestris, he asked her this plain question—"What are we to do, if that cursed Bateman holds to his text?"

CHAP. V.

THE ANSWER.

"**W**HAT are we to do!" she replied, laughing, "surely that can occasion no great puzzle.
How

How do other people of fashion manage in the time of scarcity? Let us follow their example; and, by appearing more splendid than ever, give the world no room to make ill-natured remarks. It is only your poor spiritless beings that are proper objects of ridicule, who, afraid of their shadows, renounce the appearance of affluence, when they no longer possess the reality; first drops one footman from behind the carriage, then a butler is missed at the side-board; soon after, perhaps, the porter is dislodged from his hall, and a trolloping maid-servant opens the door to tell us nobody is at home! Nay more, I have myself known an instance, where a lady of *this* description, before she was *half* ruined, sold her own four coach horses, and now jobs only a pair. But these are *rare* instances; I cannot name many of them; I profess, that for one such I will produce a hundred who, the poorer they are the better they live."

"Well, well," cried Sir Frederick, rather impatiently, "all this may be true; but money I want, and money I must have."

"Lord!" replied her ladyship, "I forgot to ask if you had been with old Curry, and what he said to you."

“ Said !—why he too gave me a flat refusal, though rather in more civil terms than that scoundrel, Bateman,”

“ Well, I protest I did not expect this of Curry ; I thought, though we had quarrelled with him, he would very willingly have done such a *little* matter to oblige us ; but never fear, for when I talk with them to-morrow, my hopes are extremely sanguine that I shall bring them both into a better temper.”

“ To tell you the truth,” returned Sir Frederick, “ I have no notion that either of them will ever be brought to a sense of their incorrigible impertinence, so I think you had better let them alone ; and as they deny their consent, I know an honest Jew who may put us in the way of doing the business, without their privity or approbation.”

“ How monstrous convenient !” exclaimed Lady Isleworth.

Sir Frederick shook his head—“ Why yes,” said he, “ but it must be done to a great disadvantage

vantage, I shall not pocket more than one-fifth of its value."

"Pish! never mind that," returned the lady, "we shall be well off to have money, at any rate; one thousand pounds *now* is, in my opinion, a thousand degrees better than five times five when one has less occasion for money. Positively, at all events, we must not degrade ourselves; any sort of infringement on our present mode of living is absolutely impossible! Can you conceive the disgrace which must be the consequence of our condescending to the little *pitiful* practices of frugality?"

Her ladyship was thus proceeding, with strongly marked energy of expression, when the flood-gates of her eloquence suddenly, closed on a servant's coming into the room, who informed his master, that a person just arrived expresses from Bath desired to see him, having business of importance to communicate. The admittance of this stranger was accordingly ordered; and Sir Frederick exclaimed, "I'll lay fifty pounds to a shilling my aunt Bridget is going to be troublesome again."

"Well, Sir," seeing the man enter as he spoke the last word, "what is your important business with me?"

"I am by profession, Sir, an undertaker, and just arrived from Bath, very humbly to offer you my services."

"I have no occasion for your services," said Sir Frederick, angrily.

"I am sorry, very sorry indeed, Sir, to find that you are already engaged; I thought I should have been the first in my application; her ladyship's death was hardly known at Bath, and indeed I did think no body could have had the *pleasure* of conveying the sad tidings earlier than myself."

"Ho, ho! I begin to understand you—speak out man—Is Lady Bridget dead?—really and truly, absolutely and *bona fide* dead?"

"Alas! Sir," cried the undertaker, lengthening his visage, "it is a *melancholy* truth; and I was in hopes to have received the honour of your commands respecting her ladyship's interment,"

"You

"You *shall* have them—you *shall* have them," cried he in a tone of transport, "yes, you *shall* have them, by G—!"

"Nothing can be more reasonable," added Lady Isleworth, her eyes dancing with joy, "to pray set about it immediately; you have *very* much obliged us by your diligence on this occasion,"

The undertaker's appearance answered to his profession. He returned this condescending acknowledgment by a profound bow; and with a solemnity of countenance suitable to the subject, entered into a detail at how much cost and trouble he supported a correspondence in families of consequence, by which means he had often the pleasure of being the first to convey news of an unexpected demise to the surviving relatives of the defunct; and ended with supposing, that her ladyship's remains were to be interred in the family vault.

"What! carry her as far as Westmoreland?" interrupted the Baronet, "by no means, by no means, Mr. Sable! the journey would be quite inconvenient; she never liked the country, or any of our family residences—no, no, *that* will never do."

"Where

“Where then, Sir, would you be pleased to direct that her ladyship should repose?”

“Why, I think the Abbey at Bath may do very well.”

“Granted?” replied the *Man of Death* “No doubt, Sir Frederick, your intentions are, that things shall be done *handsomely*?”

“Harkee, friend—as far as ye can make fifty pounds go in *pageantry* I will frank you—for any thing beyond that sum I will not be answerable.”

“I presume, Sir, that her ladyship is to be buried in lead, and fifty pounds would but barely enable me to put her into a deal shell.”

“Well, well, that is your business and not mine; put her into a leaden coffin or a quart bottle, I shall ask no questions about the matter, but the devil take me if I allow you more than fifty pounds for the job.”

A loud knock at the door announced the dawn of a riotous night; the poor trader in death, crest-fallen, and dejected at the hard bargain Sir Frederick had driven, was hastily dismissed, and the merry mourners could not find time to congratulate

gratulate each other, before they were surrounded by a little army of friends; all of whom were well disposed to take a share in their good fortune.

CHAP. VI.

WHO SHE WAS.

LADY Bridget Isleworth was the fat indolent Dowager of Sir Frederick's uncle, to whose title and estates his father first and then himself had succeeded, in all about thirty years; a very long time, it must be acknowledged, for the payment of a heavy jointure! Where is the calculator who would give a wife thirty years to run after the lease of her husband's life had expired? or where the heir who would, without grumbling, have answered the unconscionable claim of *such* an everlasting old woman?

Sir Frederick, forced by a long, tedious, series of experience, to confess that grumbling was neither pleasant or profitable, hit on a better expedient, and so totally banished from his memory the *lady* and her demands on *his* estate, that he

never

never recollected either the one or the other, except when roused by the irresistible calls, not of his own conscience, but of her ladyship's lawyers: yet even these latter mementos, though extremely troublesome, were often set at defiance, in so much that an overplus of two thousand pounds remained in his hands, which all the diligence of law could not get out of them; one method only could have brought him to account, but Lady Bridget would have nothing to do with sheriffs' officers.

This *reasonable* dowager saw the impropriety of her living beyond the limits prescribed by custom. She had also some money of her own, with very few occasions of using it, having survived the desire of all sorts of pleasure, except that of *small* play, which was neither expensive or inconvenient. For these reasons, though her application to Sir Frederick was regularly made half-yearly, she as regularly accepted, in lieu of her annuity, his civil excuses; and if she had one quarter paid when five quarters were due, it was even *more* than she expected.

That part of the Isleworth estate appropriated to the uses of Lady Bridget's settlement, was the only unentailed part of the whole; besides which advantage, it was so firmly secured to its original

nal purposes, that though the present possessor had moved heaven and earth, Jew and Christian, to burthen it, as all the rest of his acres had been burthened, yet the thing was impossible.

With what transports then must he have heard of the release of his dear aunt, by which event his still dearer estates were also *released*.— If she was gone no body could tell where, they might soon have followed, nobody knows how.

By an unusual clause in the marriage articles, it was whimsically *provided*, that the funeral expences should arise out of the jointured estate; but as no particular sum was specified for this occasional compliment, it produced the singular effect of engendering the *very* first idea of economy that had ever crossed the brain of Sir Frederick, which, however highly the prudent world may applaud it, was greatly reprobated by the noble minded undertaker, in whose opinion a *handsome* funeral compensated for all sorts of *living* evils; and to such a flame was his resentment worked up, by reflecting on the *pitiful* fifty pound *job*, that when, on his arrival at Bath, his wife, with tears in her eyes, ran to tell him a *great* misfortune had happened, that he had been *too* hasty, for that Lady Bridget Isleworth had only fallen down in a fit, and was come to life again, instead

instead of being discomforted, he snapped his fingers with the full force of exultation, and cried out, to the utter astonishment of his sorrowing help-mate, "I am glad of it!—with all my heart!" He then snatched up a pen, and addressed the following laconic epistle to Sir Frederick:

"SIR,

"Please understand that I cannot have the pleasure of putting your worthy relation Lady Bridget Isleworth to repose; fifty pounds would have done the thing with no sort of neatness; but hoping to have future favours of like kind from *self* and *family*, I would not have been off my bargain, if her ladyship had not very unexpectedly come to life again!—Hope expences incurred will be considered on next occasion.—And am, Sir, your most dutiful servant to command,

"JOHN GINGERLY."

"*Sir Frederick Isleworth.*"

Could Sir Frederick or my lady have surmised the misfortune that hung over their heads—had they known, that whilst they gayly sported in the sanguine rays of expectation, the very foundation of these expectations would have fallen to the ground—what a sombre complexion might such

such knowledge have cast over the exhilarating amusements of *that* evening, which they considered as the forerunner of wealth, or at least a partial redemption from present difficulties; but being in this instance the favourites of fortune, the mortifying intelligence that Lady Bridget was not yet ready to receive the funeral honours so prudently provided, did not reach town till after Sir Frederiek had got a purchaser for that part of his estate on which she was jointured, together with the sum of one thousand pounds in advance, before the deeds could be compleated, which were to convey the whole of this only unincumbered part of his property from himself and family for ever.

CHAP. VII.

PRELIMINARIES DISCUSSED.

THE gentleman who made this sudden purchase was no other than Mr. Curry: he had refused to give up the rights of a guardian, *because* solemnly engaged never to relinquish them;—it was a promise drawn from him in the last moments.

ments of an expiring friend: Mr. Ludlow exacted the vow, and religion taught him to respect it.

This obligation, when soberly explained to Sir Frederick, bore so strongly the figure of civil necessity, that he was not half so much displeased as he had before been, with the rude denial of Bateman; he even condescended to consult Curry on the emergency of his affairs, and complained to him of his family expences, which the honest well-meaning merchant had very wisely advised him to *retrench*.

But, that wisdom is not *always* vindicated of her children, there was a strong proof in the stubborn disrelish with which this wholesome counsel was received by the Baronet, who coldly replied,

“ There was no necessity that he should curtail Lady Isleworth of her *domestic* or *social* enjoyments for the sake of a little *present* embarrassment, which would, in the course of nature, *soon* be done away; his old aunt could not live for *ever*, and at her death he should sell an estate, the profits arising from the sale of which would liquidate *all* his debts.”

He might have said, *except* those contracted on annuities, which swallowed up four-fifths of his

his income. But with these irredeemable incumbrances he never chose to burthen his *own* thoughts, or intrude a list of them on the memory of his friends, having contracted none of these *private* blessings but on terms of *silence*, which it was not for the interest of his *money-lending* connections to break through, as long as their demands were punctually answered, which hitherto had been effected at the expence of honest tradesmen, who admitted him into their books, with more faith than discretion.

The conversation I have been alluding to happened on that memorable evening, when Sir Frederick waited on Mr. Curry, to *coax* or *curse* him out of his guardianship; but finding neither likely to succeed, and fancying he saw something in his benevolent countenance that seemed to say, *I would serve you if I could*, it is better, thought he, to make a friend than an enemy of this man, who, on some other occasion, may at least replenish my play-purse with a brace of hundreds. In conformity to this convenient opinion, he dropped the *hauteur* of a drawcanfir, and assumed the language of a suppliant, praying for counsel at the shrine of experience.

Mr.

Mr. Curry asked him, "What he conceived to be the value of his Westmoreland estate, subject to the jointure of Lady Bridget?"

"It had been estimated," he replied, "at thirty thousand pounds, and hoped it would at least produce him *that* sum."

Before they parted, Curry desired Sir Frederick he might be consulted on the purchase, whenever it was to be disposed: "he wanted," he said, "a landed property in *that* county, of course would give him more for an estate in such good condition than any other person less attached to the beauties of situation than himself."

This request gave our man of fashion a sort of negative pleasure, without acting as an immediate soporific on the shattered constitution of his deceased spirits. The prospect of touching so considerable a sum was pleasant enough; but who could measure the distance between his necessity and his affluence? he had never indeed heard that any mortal, since the Antedeluvian age, could get to the summit of two hundred years, and then tug away for the third; but if such a sturdy mortal was *ever* to exist again, he felt

felt himself fully persuaded it would be his aunt Bridget.

We have seen, after the conference had broken up, with how heavy a heart Sir Frederick returned to his splendid home : we may also have perceived no *bad* specimen of fortune's whimsicality, in the arrival of the undertaker, Mr. John Gingerly, with *glad* tidings from Bath, and the sorrowful ones which awaited his return thither ; and now we have only, if you please to bestow our comments on our hero's good luck, which carried him to close the bargain for his Westmoreland estate with Mr. Corry, at an early hour the next morning, before the letters were delivered.

Having agreed to sell and buy at the rate of twenty-five years purchase, one thousand pounds earnest money were deposited in the hands of the thrice happy squanderer, who immediately flew to the house of his friend Captain Jerry Snug, and tossed into the lap of his expecting lady a moiety of the new acquired treasure, for which his word was before engaged ; nor did he take any personal security for this sum, or other loans made in the same way, but such as Captain Snug rendered valid by a full and hearty concurrence.

These

These two visits, the one of business, the other of pleasure, being finished much to the satisfaction of Sir Frederick, he hastily drew out his watch—found it was past his hour of dressing—exacted a promise from Mrs. Snug that she would shew herself at his wife's next assembly—took a hasty, but tender adieu—knocked at the library door, as he passed down stairs, to let the complaisant husband know he was retiring—and hastened home to make Lady Isleworth a sharer in his good humour.

CHAP. VIII.

THE FORTITUDE OF A FINE LADY.

SIR FREDERICK had this morning gone out on foot, which was often his custom, when he bent his steps towards the *magnet* of his inclinations—for this good reason, that *servants* have eyes and ears, and *wives* have curiosity.

Just as he reached his house, busied in a profound reverie on the *use* of money, and the fascination of beauty, my lady's footman rushed out at the door—his face bore in it all the bustle of
 dispatch

dispatch—he had no hat on his head—and in the violence of his haste he ran against his master, whose eyes were turned on the pavement, and would have laid him low, if the Baronet, roused by so rude a shock, had not set himself in a posture of defence; but, perceiving the danger proceeded from one of his own domestics, with a curse and a blow, he demanded the occasion of his hurry; when he learned, that the mate of his bosom was dying, that the terrified servant was running to fetch the doctor!

Sir Frederick neither retarded or forwarded the haste of the messenger, but walked on to his apartment, with his thoughts rather fixed on a lively *mistress* than an expiring *wife*.

Soberly he sat himself down on a chair—soberly pulled his bell—and, on the appearance of his valet, *as* soberly enquired if his son Arthur was come back from Newmarket?

“No,” was the reply: but before he could ask after the health of Lady Illeworth, if he had any such intentions, his eldest daughter Clarissa burst into the room, and, half suffocated with her tears, cried out, “Oh! papa, what can be the matter with mama?—she is dying!—she is dying!—pray come to her this moment.”

ment." She snatched his hand, and dragged him reluctantly enough to the sick chamber.

Stretched on a sofa lay Lady Isleworth, in strong hysterics, alternately screaming, laughing, and writhing her delicate form into a thousand grotesque figures, as if she had been under the immediate influence of witchcraft.

Clarissa threw herself by the side of her mother, and endeavoured to keep her head steady, whilst Sir Frederick, advancing with as much *decent* melancholy as his happy state of mind could lend to accommodate his countenance, took up one of her ladyship's hands, when, behold, his curiosity was awakened by something which, she grasped so fast, that to unloose her hold cost him infinite pains and many struggles; but at length the task was accomplished, when he became possessed of a paper, as the reward of his exertions, the contents of which, as his eager eyes ran them over, had nearly reduced him to the same situation as the dying lady, being no other than Mr. John Gingerly's letter to announce the resurrection of Lady Bridget Isleworth!

It was many hours before this deplorable couple recovered their *usual* spirits, or even their
very

very small portion of common sense. Yet the wife's fit of spleen was shaken off sooner than the husband's chagrin; and being fit company only for themselves, every body else was dismissed from the apartment, whilst, by a sort of tacit consent, they continued together, devising on ways and means to extricate themselves from the difficulties that involved them.

Lady Insworth lifted her head from the arm of the sofa on which it was before reclined, and sitting up in an erect posture, sighed from the very bottom of her disconsolate heart—Sir Frederick walked up and down the room, meditating with a vacant countenance, on their mutual-disappointment—her ladyship was the first to break this awful silence.

“What is to be done?”—she asked,—
“What shall we do?”

Sir Frederick stopped short—stared her full in the face—but answered not; when she again repeated her question, with this addition, “My dear, Sir Frederick, what shall we do?”

Common politeness now obliged him to answer her exclamation, and he replied—“Go to the devil! I don't know any *shorter* way out of
our

our perplexities. I have engaged to sell the Westmoreland estate this morning, and have received a thousand pounds earnest."

"Charming!" cried out his transported wife "but why did you not tell me this good news sooner? A thousand pounds is better than nothing—it will enable us to fulfill all our *present* engagements! Pray give me five hundred of it this moment—you know we have promised Clarissa a ball—her establishment depends, I am convinced it does, on her appearance that night!—Lord Clarence has given broad hints already, I am sure he will make proposals the very next morning.

"Not so fast," dryly interrupted the Baronet, "I have no *five* hundred pounds, curse the old woman! to bestow on *chances* or *puppet shows*."

"Why, what then have you done, with the money? Did you not tell me this moment you had received a thousand pounds earnest for your Westmoreland estate?"

"Suppose I have, what is your wife conclusion even if I was *really* in possession of the *whole* sum?"

"Confound

“ Confound your proposition !—half is already paid to tradesmen, as a prop to their patience, and *now* I must raise that again to pay back the deposit—Of all the mischief that could befall me, Lady Bridget’s rising *before* the day of judgment is the greatest !”

“ But, Sir Frederick, why was you so premature, to pay your *dirty* trades-people before our *own* necessities were supplied ?”

He whistled, to lull his conscience, rather than brave its checks, by confirming the untruth he had advanced.

“ Surely it was mightily ill-judged,” pursued she ; “ but, as five hundred is saved out of the wreck, let me have two hundred and fifty, which, with *good* management and the new credit we *must* have gained by paying these people may enable us to be *decent*, though not magnificent.

“ You are enough to provoke the patience of Job,” thundered out the Baronet, “ have I not told you I *must* pay back the whole sum to Curry—it was *he* that bargained for my estate—and I know but one way to raise it—you have jewels, madam, and *I* have debts, are you willing
to

to part with the one that the other may be redeemed?"

"Willing!" cried her ladyship, hesitating, and pausing as she spoke, "Willing!—Yes, to be sure; I am perfectly willing to oblige you in any thing—that is to say, in any thing within my reach—but what you propose is impossible; for indeed, my dear, you have been so negligent in the payment of my pin-money, that my *jewels* are long ago *all* converted into *paste*!—Nay, don't fret about it (for now his rage was no longer to be restrained, and he stamped with the fury of a madman).—I think myself as well dressed in the *shadow* as in the *substance*," continued she; and was proceeding with her usual volubility, when the door suddenly flew open, and in bounced their son Arthur, leading a handsome, lively, bold-looking young woman, whom Lady Ilsworth received into her expanded arms, with an exclamation of joyful surprise, by the stile and title of her "Dear, dear Lady Ann Orford!"

"My dear Lady Ann!" was also repeated by Sir Frederick with equal cordiality, whilst her ladyship only replied to these spontaneous marks of fondness by a loud laugh, in which she was joined by Arthur, who, as soon as he could articulate, wonderfully astonished them, by presenting

sending their unexpected visitor, *not* as Lady Ann Orford, but as Lady Ann Isleworth.

“ Indeed !” said she, seeing her new *papa* and *mama* with a flag of incredulity hoisted on their countenances, “ indeed what the *wretch* tells you is *too* true ! Do you know, that instead of running at Newmarket, he came to the *Wilderness* to run away with me, whether I would or no.— We have actually been before the blacksmith, who put on our fetters so tight, that, heaven help us ! I fear we shall find it hard to get rid of them.”

This decided declaration on the lady’s part distanced every doubt ; Sir Frederick and Lady Isleworth renewed their caresses—their endearments were in proportion to the acres of this *reputed* heiress. And now the old aunt—the Westmoreland estate—the thousand pounds—the false jewels—with all their other various crosses, vanished before the splendid alliance of their son Arthur, whose real situation we shall disclose in the next chapter.

CHAP. IX.

INTREPID LOVE.

ARTHUR ISLEWORTH was a chip of the old block; he knew every body *but* himself, and loved every thing that did *not* promote his interest; he inherited all the *sense* of his father, with all the *propensities* of his mother, yet had never been remarked for his *talents* or his *frugality*—but for a handsome pair of eyes and regular features he had pretensions not to be disputed; these procured him a ready passport into the hearts of almost every female who looked on the *dangerous creature*; a presumptuous experiment! which, if the Scandalous Chronicle *can* be credited, has cost a dozen of them, at least, the trifling price of their whole *little* stock of chastity.

Lady Ann Orford, the only child of Lord Benvour, did not gaze on the charms of Arthur with *impunity*: she had seen him three times, and danced with him once. The flame which was lighted in these transient interviews nothing but matrimony could quench.

At first he appeared insensible to the advantage of his conquest, and would probably have
con-

continued so to the end of time, his attention being divided by a multiplicity of beauties contending for his notice, but for the lady's *own* ingenuity, who soon got acquainted with his mother. Now, whatever faults may be laid to the present times, that of maiden shyness is not to be numbered amongst them : so the love-sick dame of quality let her new friend into the affairs of her heart, and Lady Isleworth saw the connection in a mighty favourable point of view.

With some difficulty, at last she beat it into the head of her darling son, that he could not do better than offer himself to Lady Ann's acceptance. The sacrifice was accordingly made, with more archness than ardour ; and accepted, with more readiness than delicacy.

Sir Frederick waited on Lord Benvour with proposals : but Lord Benvour had other views for *his* daughter, and gave the Baronet's application a *decided* negative. Hard words passed between them ; they parted in all the bitterness of wrath.

The next day Lady Ann was forcibly taken to the country, and her sapient lover thought no more of the matter. Not so her intriguing ladyship : a tender billet reached his hands in a few

days after her seclusion, inviting his attendance in the neighbourhood of her father's house, from whence she would find a way, she assured him, to make her elopement, in defiance of locks, bolts, and duennas.

He obeyed the summons, having nothing else to do on the day she proposed meeting him. Accordingly he set out for the *Wilderness*; but did not let his family into the secret, merely that they might not laugh at him, if his scheme of carrying off the lady should prove unsuccessful; he therefore made them believe he was going to visit his *stud*, which he had sent to Newmarket, to be ready for the next week's sport.

Having once embarked, he made such dispatch, that at the end of eight days we see him returned to the arms of his *transported* parents, with an additional rib to those with which nature had provided him. So now let us leave them, exulting in their new acquired felicity, and take some other branches of this *wonder working* but *not singular* family.

CHAP. X.

CLARISSA ISLEWORTH.

CLARISSA's appearance in this uncertain world, which some think a very charming one, whilst others call it a vale of misery and shadows, was announced eleven months after the first exhibition of her brother Arthur. Mr. Curry had taken upon him to answer for her at the holy font, that she should be taught the Lord's prayer and ten commandments, like other Christian children; but finding, at the age of six years, that she could not repeat a word of either, he was a man of too much honour to renounce the duties for which he had made himself responsible; and at the joint request of his amiable wife, the young lady was readily consigned to their charge, *because* she should be out of the way, *and* because the good people to whom she was intrusted had no children of their own; so that even the *wisdom* of Sir Frederick and Lady Isleworth was sufficient to instruct them that no body carries their riches with them to another world, and that some body must inherit them in this.

Placed under the auspices of her new protectors, Miss Isleworth made rapid progress, not only in Christian but all other knowledge; and at thirteen we may venture to pronounce her a very amiable, a very beautiful, and a very accomplished girl. When she had attained this critical period, Mrs. Curry was called upon to render up the volume of her life, on the pages of which were written the actions of forty years, in characters so pure from stains, so glowing with charity in all its figurative loveliness, as can leave no doubts on the mind of the reader, but that her accounts were passed with applause at the bar of heaven.

It would be superfluous to say, that the filial endearments of a child so engaging as Clarissa had very much interested the heart and affections of Mr. Curry; he had assisted to cultivate the flowers of her mind, and to eradicate, as much as lay within the compass of his skill, the pernicious weeds of constitutional foibles. But nature is a cunning gardener; her seeds of original sin she sows deep, and their roots are stubborn. Amongst all the good qualities of his young charge, this plain worthy man could not fail to perceive a little dash of coquetry, and a great passion for shew. At these evils he had been tugging

tugging seven years, tearing them up by the branches, but leaving the root in vigour.

On the death of Mrs. Curry, Sir Frederick and Lady Isleworth came to reclaim their daughter: the generous guardian wept with agony to part with his darling, but could find no pretence for detaining her, having no longer a female inspects to direct her conduct. So great was his sorrow, that when he saw the carriage which conveyed her from him turn from the door, and felt his cheeks yet wet with her tears, he cried out, clasping his hands together, "*All* that I loved in life is taken from me, and I have nothing more to lose!"

After the first burst of grief had subsided, which the grateful heart of Clarissa naturally experienced, on being finally separated from those indulgent friends who, for so many years, seemed only to exist in her pleasures, happiness, and improvement, she began to consider her parents in a more favourable light than she at first beheld them; she thought her father very good humoured, and her mother one of the finest dressed ladies she had ever seen.

Whilst under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Curry she saw them but seldom, and then only
- in

in *dishabile*, at one or other of their houses ; but on the day when they came to fetch her away to reside with them, they appeared with all the advantages that riches could display.

They were bound that evening first for the opera, and afterwards to sup at Lady Hartford's, and from thence to the masquerade in a select party of gipseys, whose habits awaited them at the house of her ladyship.

Lady Isleworth gave notice to Mr. Curry of her intentions to call for his beloved charge at ten, and to treat her with a peep at the opera, that she might not be moped to death with melancholy on her change of habitation.

" You are a lovely creature, my dear," said this *sensible* mother, as she sat gazing on Clarissa's cherub face, who was placed opposite to her in the carriage, " you are indeed a very charming girl ! Don't you think so, Sir Frederick ?"

" She will do very well," replied the Baronet, with more admiration in the expression of his countenance than there appeared to be approbation in his words, " and if she holds up her head, and forgets every thing but her obedience

dience to *us*, we shall have no reason to be ashamed of her."

Clarissa's little heart bounded with joy at these, and many other proofs of her parents' folly, considered by her as tokens only of their fondness; and when she lightly followed the footsteps of her mother into the opera-house, which happened to be exceedingly crowded, every eye was fixed on the interesting figure before them.

A handsome youth, who had taken his post in the pit *vis-à-vis* to Lady Isleworth's box, cried out to an elderly gentleman who sat next him, "What a phenomenon! Modesty has united with vivacity, and sensibility joined itself to infantine grace, in forming that adorable creature."

Many more such speeches, from different quarters, reached the ears of the delighted beauty, and increased the animation of those delicate blushes which were before sufficiently becoming.

The exultation of Sir Frederick and Lady Isleworth at the universal gaze their daughter attracted, produced, before one act of the piece was over, with their usual sagacity, this determination,

mination, that, young as she was, the beautiful creature should be presented the following winter; because, they observed, she never could alter for the *better*, but must change for the worse.— Besides, they foresaw about that time there would be a plentiful harvest of young heirs who *must* be provided for, and these girls who are not early in the field can have no chance of reaping to their advantage.

This was Lady Isleworth's observation. But, why do I say so? I should never forgive the reader who could suppose it to be my *own*.

Clarissa, though but thirteen, anticipated in her growth the appearance of sixteen: her face and form, had they been moulded in wax, would have crowned the artist with immortal glory, as well for exactitude of proportion as beauty of colouring.

Her dress, this evening of her first and early exhibition on the stage of the world, was a frock of clear muslin, setting off her figure to the best advantage; a black sash, worn in commemoration of the affecting accident by which she was separated from the friends of her infancy, incircled her slender waist; her snowy bosom, shaded only by a lawn tucker, often heaved the
figh

figh of recollection to that melancholy event; nor could the magic of adulation repress the same sentiment from sometimes clouding her illumined countenance with momentary sadness, which, instead of defacing a single charm, gave to its expression all the graces of variety: she wore no ornament on her head, except what nature had bestowed, whose bounty might be called prodigality—so unsparingly did she lavish the finest auburn tresses in the world that they fell below the waist in wild profusion, and in part concealed a forehead unequalled in symmetry, unrivalled in whiteness; all the milder virtues revelled in her soft blue eyes; and envy herself, had she ever been known to speak truth, might have acknowledged, that every particular feature had its commission for the destruction of mankind.

At the end of the second act, in the middle of a pathetic song, once the favourite of Mrs. Curry, Clarissa, overpowered by the tender feelings of retrospection, and too young to know any thing of that fashionable fortitude which is a declared enemy to all sorts of grief, but what may owe its source to the desertion of a lover or the death of a lap-dog, felt inclined to shed tears, and shed them so freely, that her mortified parents hurried her out of the house, covered with confusion at her childish behaviour.” “She

ought to have known better," remarked Lady Isleworth; "it is entirely owing to these *dowdy* people, who have brought her up, and beat sentiment into her head unmixed with politeness."

At the door of her father's house the poor disgraced girl was bid to go to the nursery, from which she would no more be taken till she knew how to conduct herself in the circle of fashion.

Madame Finette, a French governess, being summoned, Clarissa was committed to her care, who conducted her to an apartment known by the appellation of the lecture room, because it was here that every child in the family rode their own hobby-horse, taking their lectures, as they did their sweetmeats, just as inclination directed, by which means they were not very likely to be cloyed with either.

In their way to that scholastic repository, Madame Finette was asked by Clarissa how long her brothers and sisters had been in bed? for, be it here mentioned, there had tumbled into this ill-conducted house no less than six younger children, who were all destined to scramble for education and fortunes as well as they could.

"I should

"I should suppose," said Miss Isleworth, "at so late an hour I can have no chance of seeing them to-night?"

"You will see them this moment," replied the governess, "for your sister Matilda has a cold and fever, and your mama indulges all the rest to sit by her bed-side till twelve, and amuse the poor child with a game at cards."

Clarissa lifted up her eyes, but said nothing, though perhaps she was drawing a silent comparison between her *real* and *adopted* mothers' management of young people.

They passed from the school-room into the sick chamber, where the little invalid, with a handkerchief bound round her forehead, lay stretched on the bed, with all her cloaths on, because she did not chuse they should be taken off till her companions were put to rest also. Clarissa, having fondly received and returned their caresses, very soon prevailed on the diminutive party to retire: she continued half an hour at the side of Matilda's pillow, then left it for her own, first submitting to the custom in which she had been trained, of thankfulness to her Creator for past, and imploring his future protection.

CHAP. XI.

ROSES HAVE THEIR THORNS AND VIRTUES
HAVE THEIR SHADOWS.

WHAT were Clarissa's foibles?

Too large a share of *constitutional* vivacity—
too little inclination to take the *trouble* of thinking—a *too* great desire to create admiration—and a disposition *too* much addicted to what is commonly stiled romantic, but to which, with permission, I would give a softer epithet; I would call it the effusion of tenderness, at least when springing from a mind so well-disposed as Miss Isleworth's. We know of no other foibles; and these certainly are dangerous enough to a young woman, dragged into the world before she can possibly have formed any idea of the beings which compose it: and if these errors of nature ripened to greater perfection in the hot-bed of dissipation than they would have arrived at under the careful eye of her late guardians, we may be *grieved* but must not be *surprised* at their progress.

Sir

Sir Frederick and Lady Isleworth, for several weeks saw no more of their eldest daughter, after having secured her under the paternal roof; because, on the self same evening, formed a party of pleasure for the Isle of Wight, and set off the next morning without thinking on Clarissa, or enquiring what was become of the poor little complaining Matilda, but left them both, with the rest of their infant troop, to repose for safety on Providence and the household apothecary.

There are moments of temptation to the youthful imagination, when the early lessons of wisdom, however deeply implanted, may be forgotten, but it is seldom that they can be entirely eradicated, unless the head and heart should happen to be irreconcilable variance with reason and goodness.

Had Mr. Curry seen Clarissa enter the opera-house—beheld with what eagerness she caught the flying sounds of encircling admiration—witnessed the transports that flushed her cheeks and sparkled her eyes, he would have cried out, “*The foundation I have laid on is shaken, and the whole edifice must fall to the ground!*”

Yet the following day, had he contemplated her in the act of conveying those instructions to
others

others which she had learned from himself—had he seen her in the nursery, surrounded by her lisping brothers and sisters, hearing them read their catechisms, and teaching them to say their prayers, which being a new exercise, seemed to delight them as much as any other novelty; had he heard her preaching to them the pleasures of application and the disgrace of idleness,—then would he have rejoiced in his amiable pupil—then would he have exclaimed, “*This good girl never can be seduced by the prevalence of example.*”

Enough at present of Clarissa, and the little brood of untaught urchins who claimed her cares and divided her affections; we now turn back to a breakfast scene, succeeding that day when Arthur, by bringing an unportioned wife into the family, seemed to have completed its destruction.

There were assembled round the table of this elegant repast, ostentatiously decorated by plate unclean and china ill paired, Sir Frederick Isleworth, with a *doubting* countenance, in which satisfaction would have shone predominant, had there been no difference whether a man married a wife *with* or *without* the consent of her father; —Lady Isleworth, happy, because her happiness was unalloyed by reflection—supremely happy
that

that she could address a daughter-in-law by the high-sounding titles of Lady Ann, and your Ladyship;—the bridegroom, paying little attention to any body, or any thing, except himself, his tea, his bread, and his butter;—the bride, highly rouged, trying *not* to look confident; whilst Clarissa, like modesty personified, but pale and dejected, closed the family circle.

“Arthur,” said Sir Frederick, in a tone half pleased half serious, “the honour this lady has done us, by uniting herself to our house, must make us active to deserve it.”

“Damn the tea!” cried Arthur, who had burnt his mouth at the beginning of his father’s flowery conception: “*Clarissa*, why did you give it me so confounded hot?”

“It is your own fault,” said Lady Ann; “are you not of age to know *what* will do you good or *what* will do you harm?”

“That is as it may happen.” retorted he, fulkily; and, pouring out the tea into his saucer, he remained silent.

“Poh! what a spoiled child you are!” said
his

his mother, fondly tapping his cheek, "I hope Lady Ann will not indulge you as I have done."

"Indeed, Madam, I shall never endanger his humour by any such trials," she replied, "for it *has*, and ever will *be* my opinion, that men were formed to be *our* slaves, and not our *masters*.—Am I right, Arthur?"

"No, by G—;" replied he, "but, right or wrong, the thing is *done*, and we must make the best of it."

The thread of Sir Frederick's fine spun compliment had been broken, and he seized upon this occasion to reunite it.

"Make the best of it!" he repeated, "Why surely, Arthur, such a fate as your's can stand in no need of philosophy, unless it be to teach you *moderation*, in supporting your felicity in being husband to the *beautiful* daughter and *sole* heiress of Lord Benvour."

They both burst into a loud laugh. "Oh, Lord!" cried Lady Ann, "my *beauty* may stand the test; but, as to my *money*, I positively never expect a single shilling from my father! he is one of the most unreasonable *old*

Quizes

Quizes you ever met with : here I *am*, and you must do with me as you can."

"Well, my dear," replied Lady Isleworth, delighting in the wit of her new relation, "we shall with pleasure provide you an establishment not unworthy your birth and accomplishment."

Sir Frederick stared—Arthur whistled—Lady Ann smiled—and Clarissa blushed, from a consciousness, no doubt, of her mother's total inability to perform, even in little, what she had promised so largely.

"Pray, Arthur, have you and Lady Ann," asked Sir Frederick, "written to my Lord on the subject of your marriage ; it has now taken place six days, and I should hope you have not neglected so necessary a duty."

"O yes," replied her ladyship, "we have written, I assure you."

"Well, and what does he say?" asked the Baronet, eagerly.

"Oh !" cried her unembarrassed ladyship, "that question has put me in mind of the most comical story you ever heard in your life ; *besides,*

sides, it is so applicable, you must allow me to repeat it: An old nurse, dandling on her knee a poor little squalling brat just popped into the world, asked it a thousand nonsensical questions, among the rest, what they had given it to eat? The babe of course said nothing. So some wit sent it about for a miracle, that when nurse asked the question, the child answered *Nothing at all*. Now, you cannot think how many fools I have made on the foundation of this jest; but I only tell it you as being exactly my father's answer to the mournful ditty of repentance, duty, and all *that*, which Arthur and I sent him, as *soon* as the blacksmith parson had converted two ideots into one fool!"

The story having ended with a violent fit of laughter, Lady Isleworth again declared her approbation of Lady Ann's talents for humour; and indeed it was the *only* quarter through which it was *possible* she could receive applause: Sir Frederick was struck dumb: Mr. Isleworth continued looking at some memorandums he had noted down on a Newmarket calendar, of course did not attend either to the tale or to the relater. As to Clarissa, her eyes were fixed on her father, with that pity-moving expression as if she would have said, "*Alas! Sir, I am sure you are unhappy.*"

Lady

Lady Isleworth, seeing every face but her own and Lady Ann's dressed in the unbecoming mode of consideration, began to complain of the disagreeable effects which the disappointment of Lady Bridget's revival to life had left on her spirits; and begged, if her husband did not desire to see her again reduced to the same extremity from which she had so lately recovered, *all serious* subjects might at present be dismissed; "besides, I must go," said she, "to MAYO, my upholsterer, and order furniture for Lady Ann Isleworth's apartment: *indeed* I am petrified with shame that she should have passed the night in a place so ill-fitted for *her* reception."

CHAP. XII.

PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

BESIDES the *certain* advantages which this house of fashion enjoyed, by engrafting a noble branch on the stock of their own gentility, there were other honours, other emoluments, not *quite* so certain, but which afforded, in contemplation, a great deal of matter for hope to build on.

The

The imagination of projectors, *such* projectors as Sir Frederick and Lady Illeworth, may be compared to a shallow stream, on whose bosom is continually floating a succession of green leaves, golden-coloured straws, and silver coloured feathers, which cheat the eyes of a fool, but engages not the attention of a wise man.

Years had this contriving pair been planning matches for Clarissa, which something or other always happened to interrupt. As to the young lady herself, who, as she grew in stature, beauty, and sweetness, became the idol of all the young men about town—to *her* neither their parents or guardians *could* have framed any reasonable objection; but there was a fatal rock, not to be hid from the eyes of any body *less* blind than a man whom love has effectually hoodwinked; and such objects are seldom let to wander alone; some experienced guide generally attends their footsteps, to point out the shoals and quicksands of poverty, the traces of which it was impossible should be concealed, by any artifice, from peeping out in the shattered finances of the Illeworth family.

Lord Clarence, two winters preceding the commencement of my history, saw and admired Clarissa. Many things were in favour of this
match,

match, with only *one* against it—he *was* an earl, he *was* rich, he *was* independent, *but* he *was* already married; and whether it happened that he did not *chuse* to adopt the present mode of engaging *one* wife to fill the place of another, before *that* other has vacated, or whether he saw in the modest mein of Miss Isleworth that any proposition of the sort would be received with the scorn and contempt it would have merited, he refrained from declaring his passion; and, to avoid temptation, took his invalid *cara sposa* into the country, from whence he no more returned until he had seen his countess decently interred; and whiled away the first solitary months of widowhood, not in shedding hypocritical tears over her ashes, but in counting the weeks, the days, the hours, when with propriety he might go back to town and offer himself to the acceptance of Clarissa, whose lovely image accompanied his imagination in all its flights.

It would be too much to say he came, he saw, he conquered; yet he did *come*, he did *see*, but the conquest remained doubtful.

By Sir Frederick and Lady Isleworth his lordship was received as a blessing least expected, and at a time the most acceptable; not that he had opened the siege in form; however, it must
be

be confessed, he was set down before the citadel, with such an army of sighs, ogles, and attentions, as to much *less* critical observers would fully have explained the nature of his visits to Portman Square.

Clarissa herself was the last to understand what was his *real* meaning; but, when her mother pulled the bandage from her eyes with which indifference had bound them—when she could no longer plead ignorance of Lord Clarence's partiality, without calling in question the veracity of her parents, who a hundred times a day congratulated her on the certainty of an establishment, brilliant, even beyond their hopes—when she considered their perseverance in any scheme of aggrandizement, and the warmth of his lordship's pursuits, she trembled at her own situation, and her heart sickened with sadness, bordering on despair.

At the period when Arthur introduced Lady Ann Isleworth to his family, poor Clarissa was deprived of the only real friend she could be said *ever* to have possessed.

Mr. Curry's affection for his adopted daughter continued lively and fervent as in the days of her childhood. On her part, though *every* one
of

of her thoughts, or perhaps of her actions, as she sailed down the stream of dissipation, signet-like, on the feathers of her mother swan, may *not* have been so irreproachable as to make her unfeared of his censure, lay them unreservedly before him, *yet* there were few exceptions on which she did not consult his judgment and follow his counsel, particularly when beginning to fear the approaches of Lord Clarence. Ah! with what speed would she have flown to hush her throbbing apprehensions in his fatherly tenderness, to have asked his advice, and to have followed his *directions*, if an insuperable bar had not already arisen to separate her from that one only *but* certain source of consolation.

Mr. Curry's visits for many years were frequent and well received in Portman-square; but, about six months before death had released Lord Clarence from the pains and penalties of wedlock, it so happened that the guardian father of Miss Isleworth called at the house, when none of the family were very visible but Clarissa herself.

He found her languid, depressed, debilitated—the wreck of beauty, and the martyr of dissipation!

Looking

Looking at her with an air of tender compassion, he shook his head, and asked the cause of her faded complexion, her heavy eyes, and irritated nerves; for, as she presented her hand to his touch, it seemed to tremble with the palsy of four-score.

Clarissa candidly confessed, that in obeying the *commands* of her mother she had made a sacrifice of no less than her whole stock of health and spirits: "I have not," said she, "been in bed for many nights! I have not laid down my poor aching head on the pillow of rest before your hour of rising."

He heard, he pitied, he loved, and he hoped to serve her, by using his influence with Lady Isleworth to ease her daughter from some of those labours with which pleasure taxes her votaries, when they misuse her service, by making it a toil instead of relaxation.

The good old gentleman deferred not his *eclaircissement*, but seized on the first favourable opportunity to awaken the fears of Lady Isleworth for the *life* of her daughter; a liberty so much resented by this high-spirited woman, that in defiance of interest, gratitude, and all other obstacles, she forbade him to intermeddle in *her* family

family affairs—hinted, that, his *future* calls would be dispensed with—and, on pain of her eternal displeasure, commanded Clarissa never more to hold converse with so vulgar a *cit*, who ought to confine himself to his counting-house, without presuming to profane, by his *awkward* presence, the elegant refinements, only calculated for the *very first* classes—people of birth and education! Which imperious interdiction was the death-blow of all that remained to Clarissa of *real* tranquillity: she wept—she intreated, but all to no purpose.

She would even have ^{disregarded} the maternal injunction as a lesser evil than renouncing the friend who had every claim to her filial respect, and more than filial affection; but *that* friend loved her too sincerely to *sanction* an act of disobedience, however amiable may be the source from whence it originated.

For her sake alone Mr. Curry made no shew of the resentment which he could not *but* feel, at an affront so little consonant to what his conscious, upright, honest heart had taught him to expect: all the notice he took of Lady Isworth's impertinence was to obey her orders, avoid her house; and, instead of seeing his favourite Clarissa, to content himself by thinking

of her, with now and then making such enquiries about her, from their common acquaintance, as oftener procured him pain than satisfaction. No body could tell him that Miss Isleworth looked *well*, but every body could inform him she was, as usual, to be seen with her mother, at all fashionable places of public or private amusement.

Such as I have just related was the untoward predicament in which stood the two families of Isleworth and Curry, when, more from necessity than choice, Sir Frederick was forced, by a derangement of his affairs, to make a first advance towards a reconciliation.

A worthy man will never relax in the laws of hospitality, though it be an enemy that seeks the shelter of his roof. Mr. Curry on this score received the Baronet with politeness.

Yet would he not consent to relinquish the trust reposed in him by the father of Lady Isleworth, because such a compliance ill assorted with his notions of rectitude: he also agreed to become the purchaser of his Westmoreland estate, at an advanced price, and, as we have already said, paid down a thousand pounds deposit-money, on a second visit from Sir Frederick to

nour, "that she was not *yet* intitled to have the *ease* of her situation so *particularly* consulted."

"Ring the bell, Clarissa," said her mother, as she stepped forwards to take a survey of her person in the glass.

The bell was rung—a servant entered, and her coach was ordered.

"I shall leave Arthur and Clarissa to amuse you, my dear Lady Anne," continued she, addressing herself to the bride, "whilst I go amongst my friends to announce our felicity, and to my trades-people, to provide for your accommodation."

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Lady Ann, "be merciful and take us with you! I have all possible friendship for my sister Clary; but, to be left behind with *only* her and one's *husband*, the idea is insupportable! How ridiculous Arthur and I should feel ourselves, if Miss Isleworth happens to be called away in your absence, and we left alone to all the miseries of a *tete-a-tete*! No, Madam, you cannot intend to be so inhuman."

"You need not disturb my mother's plans on *that* account," replied Arthur, "for in half an hour

hour I shall be off for Nemwarket, where I ought to have been many days ago:—you stopped my course *once*, but I'll be d—d if any female in Britain shall ever again play me the same trick."

"Well, go your own way, incorrigible *Orson*," said her lively ladyship, "and if you do but make your pilgrimage decently *long*, I might possibly be *glad* to see you again when you come back."

"As you please," cried he, "Good bye;" and ran out of the room, whilst his father followed; and, overtaking him in the hall, desired to exchange a few words with him in private. Arthur did not much like the restraint thus laid on his speed; he submitted with an ill grace; they adjourned together, and Sir Frederick opened the business.

"I fear, *Sir*, you have made a *bad* hand of it," said he, "in taking the daughter of Lord Ben-vour *without* the consent of her father, who I know to be a cursed obstinate fellow."

"I fear so *too*," replied the son, "and if there was any cure in *repentance* for the *sin* of matrimony, I should certainly adopt it. *But*, *Sir*, give me leave *now* to pursue my more *agreeable* engagements: Lord Turfover and Jack Bypost
wait

wait for me at Tattersall's: the cursed matter you would speak upon will take up more time than I *can* spare. I have bets depending to the tune of a thousand, and I shall be thrown out of my chance if I delay my journey."

"Necessity has no law!" observed the Baronet, "go then, and may fortune speed the plough! If you are successful, I charge you send me by express five hundred pounds, which I have immediate need for, to get out of the damn'dest scrape I ever experienced."

"Depend on me, *if in my power*," said Arthur, and off he went; whilst Sir Frederick returned to take up his hat, intending to make a third visit to Curry; but on so mortifying an errand, that had it been in his own election, he would rather have gone a hundred miles any other way. He met, as he was going back, Lady Ann, dragging Clarissa towards the billiard-room, who had reluctantly consented to divert her ladyship, in the absence of her mother, with a game which *she* did not understand, *but* on which her sister protested *she* doted to distraction.

Arthur, being once got clear of his father's house, little imagined that any other impediment would be thrown in the path of his appointment.

Yet

Yet an impediment did start up, which, with all his strength, he could not have jumped over, but that he had, just before replenished his famished purse with all that he could be certain to touch of Lord Benvour's enviable riches.

Lady Ann had received from her father's steward the half of her yearly stipend, which amounted to two hundred and fifty guineas, the day preceding her elopement; and, possessed of this sum, together with a few valuable jewels, she turned her back upon the *Wilderness*. The odd fifty was scattered in making their way to and from Gretna Green, Mr. Isleworth having indifferently provided himself with the *possibles* for such an expedition. The round two hundred fortunately remained, and were still more fortunately reposing in the pocket of Arthur, when the sure hand of law fell upon his shoulder, within sight of the house he had just quitted.

In plainer terms, he was arrested upon an action which warranted every species of severity, having contracted a debt of ninety-five pounds for a diamond-ring, in his minority, which debt, though master of some hundreds on coming of age, he manfully refused to pay.

Right

Right or wrong, the exasperated tradesman determined to lay hold of him; and the event shewed how well he judged the matter; for Arthur, who would have knocked the officer down, if he could have turned his time to no better account, thus attacked in the midst of his pressing engagements, not only paid the bill, but gave the fellow ten pieces of gold to divide between himself and the cost of the suit; after which he happily joined his two friends at Tatterfall's, took a whet of brandy, drank confusion to law-makers and law-executioners, cursed their grooms for faults they had not committed, and, in high spirits galloped towards Newmarket, where, if a man pays but at the rate of twenty-shillings for every pound of flesh his racers carry on their bones, that man is better off than his neighbours.

Sir Frederick Isleworth, without once lifting his eyes above the pavement, in his long walk from Portman-square to New Bond-street, might, in the moments of his peregrination, have been mistaken for a man of *reflection*: indeed, if he ever thought in his whole life, this was certainly the season for thinking.

A thousand pounds to refund! and only half that sum out of which it could be refunded!—
what

what to do, and what to say, afforded him, in a poetical phrase, "food for contemplation, even to madness."

Buried in a sleep-like reverie, he did not see many of his acquaintance who met or passed him, neither did his plodding pace or studious features serve as a herald to proclaim him a man of *pleasure*, one person only could distinguish *that* character through all its disguises.

"It is surely him!—it is surely him!" exclaimed a fine looking woman, with a footman walking behind her at a respectful distance, on the opposite side of the street, to which Sir Frederick was crossing—then paused, and again cried out, "Yes, I swear it is Sir Frederick himself!"

Had any accents but those of Mrs. *Snug* announced him, in his haste to get forward, he might not have honoured the exclamation with any degree of attention; but, roused by the well-known dulcet voice of his siren, what he thought the most happy idea his wisdom ever engendered, made him spring almost into her arms, begging to know, with undecipherable agitation, whether she had disposed of the money he had supplied her with the day before?

“To be sure I have!” replied the lady, somewhat startled, “but why do you enquire?”

“Only, my dear creature! if you *could* grant me the loan of it, *just* for eight and forty hours, you will do me a *very* singular service.”

“And myself singular pleasure,” replied the sprightly dame, recovering from her surprise, “*if it was in my power*; but, pray remember, that my *husband’s* necessities is a sinking-fund, that swallows up all the riches *I* can gather together.”

The disappointed lover cursed *all* husbands, but—her’s in particular. However, as no time was now to be wasted on barren subjects, they made an assignation to meet again in two days, and separated.

CH A P. XIV.

ARRANGEMENT.

IT would be difficult to describe what were the feelings of Sir Frederick as he approached the merchant’s door; they were such as can be only understood

understood by a proud man, who, in struggling with poverty, loses what is more valuable to him than life itself, *his* consequence, *his* hauteur, *his* importance ! or, to speak allegorically, one who is forced to lay down his costly robe of ostentation, and to cloath himself in the plain garb of humility.

The knocker trembled in his hand—the door opened—Mr. Curry was at home—and he followed the servant into the presence of his master, who got up to receive him, with so much cordiality in his manner, so much benevolence in his countenance, that the Baronet began to take courage ; and the hearty shake of his hand, which gave him the welcome he had reason to despair of, was returned with equal warmth, if not equal sincerity.

“ I thank you,” said the merchant, as soon as they were seated, “ for this early visit : I see you fine gentlemen can be punctual when business is to be settled. I have appointed my lawyer to meet you here in half an hour ; our bargain will soon be completed ; after which we will go to the bank, where I will make a transfer to *you* of the sum agreed on for your Westmoreland estate.—You are silent,” continued he, “ perhaps you repent of your bargain ? If that
should

should be the case I shall, not insist on your fulfilling it."

Sir Frederick was silent, for no other reason than that he did not know what to say. The offer of letting him off restored him to speech; he started up—stood with his back to the fire—looked down on his buckles—took out his snuff-box—and, as he opened the lid, he opened his mouth also.

"My dear Sir,"—he lifted his hand to his nose—"this is execrable snuff!—I have done myself the *honour*, my dear Sir, to attend your levee this morning, *on* the most detestable occasion you can possibly imagine! I am shocked to tell you, that our agreement *must* dissolve, not from any caprice of my own,"—suppressing an oath, "no, my very good friend, I was but too happy in your generous proceedings; *but* a fatal accident has happened since I saw you last, that makes it impossible for me to profit by them."

Here he was interrupted—Mr. Curry felt himself alarmed lest his favourite Clarissa might some how or other be involved in the accident Sir Frederick seemed so truly to lament, and asked him eagerly if Miss Isleworth was well?

He

He slightly answered, " Yes, very well ;" and proceeded to explain the resurrection of Lady Bridget, treating the subject with more sorrow than he would have bestowed on the memory of his wife and children, had the sword or pestilence swept them all away from the face of the earth ; but when, with mortified looks, and almost with tears of contrition, he revealed his incapacity to repay the thousand pounds advanced in part of the purchase, *this* was the remarkable answer he received from the blunt but noble minded merchant.

" Sir Frederick, you are not only welcome to the money you have spent, but also to a second thousand, on no other security than your own note, if such a loan will be serviceable to you."

" Do I construe you right, my good Sir !" cried the astonished Sir Frederick, " is it possible, my dear Mr. Curry, that you should *certainly* intend me so *capital* an obligation !—a favour so much above my hopes, my expectations, my deserts !" He might have continued longer in the same strain, if my good, sir, my dear Mr. Curry, had not laid an embargo on the fluency of his expressions, by again declaring it was his *full* intent and *meaning* to accommodate him with
the

the sum specified.—“But,” added he, “I do *not* tell you that I shall advance it *unconditionally*.”

“I understand you,” said the Baronet, my son shall join in the security.

“I have already told you, Sir Frederick,” he replied, “that I will accept *no* other security than your *own* note. But we men of business never part with our money unless for interest or premium:—*interest* I relinquish, *premium* I expect.”

“Take it then, for thou art an honest fellow!” cried out the delighted Baronet; “keep back half; give me another five hundred, and I will acknowledge myself your debtor for *two* thousand! And now, my dear friend, let us close the bargain *this* moment, that I may carry the money to Lady Isleworth, who tells me twenty times a day that she is in want of a thousand necessaries.”

“Sir, you miscomprehend me,” said the merchant, calmly, “I have indeed signified my expectation of a *premium*, but it must be of my *own* naming; and I shall tell you before hand, I shall ask what is of more value than the two thousand

thousand pounds I am ready to lend you, ten times counted over."

Sir Frederick started, and again applied to his snuff-box, saying coldly, and in a tone of displeasure, "I profess, *Mister Curry*, I do not understand you."

"Then Sir," he replied, "give me your attention for ten minutes, and I hope to explain myself to your satisfaction." Sir Frederick bowed *stately*, and the merchant proceeded.

The tale he told would have interested any other hearer; *but* Sir Frederick listened per force, and betrayed no symptom of animation till it was brought to a conclusion; except that turning his face in disgust to the fire, and biting his nails almost to the quick, he sometimes uttered a hasty farcasm on men who did not know their own minds, and a damn on his own involvements, which made him subservient to their changes. But these sounds of discontent being only the birth of a whisper, they ascended the chimney, without touching upon the ear of Mr. Curry, whose tale, for brevity's sake, I shall take leave to curtail.

CHAP. XV.

ALL IS WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

THE merchant informed Sir Frederick, that he had a sister lately arrived from India, the widow of an officer, a man of rank, who for many years enjoyed the first command at Bengal;—that the death of her husband having broken the ties which held her from her native land, she was come back to her family, with a sad heart and shattered constitution.

“ I will no longer,” added he, “ hold out the language of an usurer; *if* you do *me* the honour to accept a favour, I shall do myself the pleasure to *solicit* one of far greater consequence—the company of Miss Isleworth for a few weeks, or as long a time as you can consent to part with her, I am most ambitious to obtain for the beloved sister of whom I have been speaking, and to whom I never shall be able to present a gift so precious as such a companion, who will have the goodness to forward the recovery of her health,

health, cherish its first dawn, and sooth her sorrows."

"And is this really *all* that you require of me!" said Sir Frederick, brightening into rapture. "Why, at this rate, my good friend, you make me doubly your debtor. *Clarissa* shall attend your sister either in town or country, as soon as she is ready to receive her; *but* how long she may continue her guest it is not in my power to say—that depends on circumstances; we have a brilliant establishment in view for her, the event of which must determine the length of her visit."

Afterwards the conversation was lengthened by Sir Frederick's giving Mr. Curry the history of Arthur's marriage, and explaining the nature of his views for *Clarissa*; which being ended, they parted, with much good humour on one side, and much joy on the other, the merchant having presented the Baronet with the second bank note. Consonant to his plans, and suppressing his own impatience, he consented also not to call upon him for the performance of his promise, till Lady Isleworth had given herself a ball, and Lord Clarence an opportunity to declare himself the lover of *Clarissa*, which, Mr. Curry archly observed, would be killing two birds

birds with one stone. I hardly know how to say whether he *did* or did *not* wish success to the latter part of this family enterprise; for, though it was very certain he was warmly interested in the happy establishment of Miss Isleworth, yet it is altogether *as* certain that he had no particular predilection in favour of nobility by the *lump*, nor did he think a peer better or wiser than another man, *unless* the benevolence of his heart, *and* the prudence of his actions, decidedly gave him the precedence.

Sir Frederick, lightly measuring his steps homeward, called his thoughts to council on a very important question, whether it would be wisest, discreetest, best, to let Lady Isleworth into the transaction of the morning? or, by smothering the whole affair, keep possession of his newly acquired wealth, without being forced to divide it on the score of domestic exigencies? If he buried in his own breast the good-natured generosity of Curry, there could be no opening for him to divulge *his* part of the agreement, or to obtain the consent of her ladyship that Clarissa should make good his engagement, which, when disclosed, he apprehended would raise *some* troublesome altercation; and, if he was a coward on the occasion, most married men will be able to
enter

enter experimentally into the nature of his timidity.

He paused—he reasoned—he ruminated; at length, remembering that he had an evening appointment for high play, his wavering judgment settled into something like decision; and he resolved not *entirely* to conceal his good fortune, but so far to temporize with it, as to acknowledge her guardian's politeness in not demanding *that* half of the deposit-money already spent; and this he thought a sufficient communication to obtain her concurrence with his plans, especially as they have been arranged so cautiously, that Clarissa's rusticating would by no means interfere with their designs upon Lord Clarence; “for,” said he, as he pursued his way, talking to himself, as men of pleasure sometimes will do,—“for,” said he, “if Lord Clarence does not lay hold of the opportunity *we* give him to speak *out*, he has no serious mind to the girl; and if he *does* declare himself, he may visit her in any other place as well as in Portman-square.”

This was his last determination, and his last expression, as he stopped at his own door, just in time to offer his hand to Lady Isleworth, who
was

was at that moment stepping out of her carriage.

And here I also stop to apologise for having sent Arthur to Newmarket, the young ladies to the billiard-table, and attending Sir Frederick to the city, without having yet endeavoured to trace her ladyship's wheels through the various circumvolutions, with this *only* excuse to offer for so palpable an omission, *namely*, that I never in my life had a capacity to do or say more than one thing at a time: but as diligence is in some cases a remedy for neglect, I shall now pursue, and try to overtake, the straggling moments that have escaped me.

Lady Isleworth began this eventful morning at the wrong end of business. The first call she made was at Mr. Mayo's the upholsterer, where she gave orders for a suit of silk damask hangings, state-bed, and as many other little necessities, for the accommodation of Lady Ann, as, when entered on that fashionable tradesman's book, would have cut a dashing figure; to which sort of dash her ladyship was so far from raising objections, that it was never her custom to ask the price of *any* thing, but to order *every* thing; "such scrutinies," she would observe, "became only
only

only the vulgar, and, when adopted by genteel people, brought them nearly on a level."

With a million of charges to have her newly purchased articles sent home as expeditiously as possible, she was tripping through the shop, when her attention being suddenly arrested by a curious chair, which she had not taken notice of before, she turned back to give it a second look, when a screen of equal beauty divided her admiration: the temptation was not to be resisted; the chairs would be wanted at her grand gala—the screens were *divine*, and she *could* not do without them; of course they were added to her list of *necessaries*.

The heads of her horses were now turned towards the city; but in her way to Parker's, in Fleet-street, she stopped at many other shops; and, as far as one can be said to buy without laying out money, she bought silks, flowers, and feathers, to a large amount.

The last object that hung itself out to catch her notice was suspended from a pawn-broker's window—it was a watch and chain studded with diamonds. "Ah!" cried she, "what a sweet present for Lady Ann!" Her eyes sparkled with the pleasant idea;—she pulled the check,
and

and sent one of her tall footmen (for she had two behind her carriage) to bring the man and the watch *that* moment before her.

A little figure, more like a weasel than a man, obeyed the summons. She eagerly caught the trinket from his shaking hand, put it in her pocket, and, bidding the servant give him a card of direction, ordered herself to be conveyed to Parker's.

The diminutive seller of second-hand finery, gasping with agony for the fate of his toy, demanded to have it returned, or immediate payment of one hundred guineas, which was the price affixed to it on a scrap of paper, but which had passed by her ladyship's observations.

Finding the trader would have the *watch* or the *money*, she gave him back the former, the latter not being in her possession, and with an air of sovereign contempt, bad him learn how to treat people of *quality*, who condescended to stop at his little dirty *den* of a shop. The man only *grinned* a reply, and carried off the disputed prize in triumph.

It may tire a reader's patience, were we to detain him at every door where it was the pleasure

sure of Lady Isleworth either to get out of her coach or to give her directions from within. We will therefore content ourselves with merely saying, that her ladyship remained so long as Parker's in chusing lustres for her ball-room, that when she came home and was met at the door by Sir Frederick, the first bell had given notice that a dinner was provided, which, *all* things considered, is not to be set down as one of those common occurrences which daily happen in families of irregularity.

CHAP. XVI.

A NEW CHARACTER.

LORD CLARENCE, the only guest invited to their table on this memorable day, rushed out of his chariot, ten minutes after Sir Frederick with the three ladies had sat down at table—was presented to the *bride*—paid his compliments to *every* body—particularized nobody—and, with the familiar well-bred ease of fashion, threw

threw himself into a chair, purposely placed by the side of Miss Illeworth.

Clarissa turned pale or red at every insignificant sentence which, in the course of a general conversation, he undesignedly addressed to herself; but whether these sudden variations of countenance proceeded from approbation or disgust, is a secret that will be disclosed in the future pages of this history.

Lord Clarence was tall, thin, and far from being inelegant—his features not bad, and his countenance expressive; but that expression had more in it of pride, than passions of any kind, particularly of the *tender* sort; yet his heart was really occasionally susceptible of the softest, though not of the most *lasting* impressions;—his manners were unexceptionable, at least they were universally pleasing; as, with much study, he had obtained the exclusive privilege of adapting them to all conditions of man, but more especially of womankind:—his general character may be comprised in two short sentences—by his own sex he was called a damn'd knowing fellow for a lord; and by the other, a dear dangerous creature, with whom it was more safe to trust their *purses* than their *hearts*.

His

His Lordship, enquiring for his friend Arthur, and being told that a few hours before he had taken a trip to Newmarket, his large black penetrating eyes cast a side-long glance at Lady Ann, as if for the first time he had thought it worth his while to take a survey of her pretensions to beauty. No, glance, however side-long, could pass unnoticed by the person to whom it was directed. *Too* much a woman of *ton* to be troubled with any thing like *mauvaise honte*, she caught at the silent-expression, and explained its meaning, by asking him, “when *he* was a married man, whether he liked to be fastened to his wife’s side like a watch chain?”

His Lordship, who perhaps was thinking of something else, started, and even coloured, at the abruptness of her question; but, as the reply was not seasoned with an equal quantity of *attic salt*, we shall not force it on the palate of our readers.

Clarissa engrossed more of the noble visitor’s attention than she seemed to desire, or would have received with her usual politeness, had not the looks of her father and mother, which perpetually scrutinized the least of her motions, kept her in awful submission; the heaving sigh was suppressed, and the tear that struggled in

her eye was forbidden to flow; yet, through the thickest covering she could throw over her feelings, a common observer might have read this inscription on her countenance—*My heart is not at ease.*

Lady Ann certainly was not over and above delighted with the visible preference given to her sister-in-law, and contrived to make herself very pleasant, and the object of her envy *very* unpleasant, by turning them both into ridicule, declaring, that if Arthur Isleworth had ever shewn a *marked* preference to *her* in public, or even in a private circle, she should have *hated* him—ending with a broad laugh at those prudish girls (glancing at Clarissa) who set up to receive their lovers with all the formality of a school-mistress, and all the insensibility of an automaton.

Sir Frederick tried to give the conversation another turn—talked of the present war—of the last new opera—of horse-racing—and the bench of bishops.

Lady Isleworth, still paying the greatest deference to her daughter-in-law, but fearing my Lord might be displeased with her flippancy, volunteered in the service of dividing his attention,

on, and stunned her hearers with a confused medley of the fatigues of shopping—the impertinent delays of trades people—the carelessness of coachmen—the stupidity of footmen—of her own indefatigable labours—of her own purchases—of her own cleverness—and, last of all, of her own intended ball; which very naturally put it into the head of Lord Clarence to remind Clarissa she had promised to be his partner, adding something very tender, but in so low a whisper as made it optional whether she would or would not make any *serious* use of his professions; and she chose the latter, pretending not to have heard them.

When the ladies withdrew after dinner, Miss Illeworth, recollecting that she had not seen her two little sisters for the whole day, ran up to the nursery, and, in her absence, gave an opportunity to her mother of displaying a great deal of eloquence at *her* expence.

Bitterly did she complain to Lady Ann of Clarissa's late change in person, manners, and humour; her vehemence alone might have convinced even a deaf observer how little she was satisfied. Lady Ann wanted neither ears, eyes, or relish, for such spirited railings, when lavished on a *rival* beauty, or a *dear* friend, the con-

venient appellation for young ladies who love by *profession* and hate by *instinct*. Every fault imputed to the *favorite* of Lord Clarence, acted upon the diseased mind of Lady Ann, like Bristol milk on a consumptive habit of body.

“ I can in no manner account for so extraordinary a revolution,” cried Lady Isleworth, “ it is absolute witchcraft ! Did you ever see a complexion so faded ? Her skin was *once* remarkably white, and see ! what is it *now* but chalk ?—absolute chalk ! Then her person—do but look at her person ! six months ago she was just such a figure as myself, but there is *now* no vestige of grace remaining ! Would you believe, Lady Ann, that, with all the authority of a mother, I am not able to make her dress like *other* people ! or will she be persuaded to put on rouge !—it is impossible to give you any idea of her obstinacy.”

“ It is impossible,” replied the other, shrugging her shoulders, “ that any hints from your ladyship should make me wiser than I am. I know Clary is stubborn—and I am sure she is in love !”

“ In love !” then it must be with my Lord Clarence.”

“ With

"With Lord Clarence! no, I will be sworn she has no partiality for his lordship."

"Nay, Lady Ann, it can be with no body else, as she *knows* Sir Frederick and I are *determined* she shall marry him."

"Lord! my dear Lady Isleworth, what can *that* signify? Remember, I *foretold* that she will reject the husband of *your* choice, and take the man of her *own*."

The lovely subject of this chit chat moment came into the room, leading in each hand a pretty little girl, who for the first time were presented to Lady Ann, and graciously received; she not only saluted them very kindly, but also paid them the particular compliment of saying, she hated *all* children *but* themselves. Their mother, *too*, condescended to bid them hold up their heads; and, telling them, when their elder sisters had got husbands it would be *their* turn *next*, sent them back to their nursery.

Mean time the father of Clarissa, and his noble guest, being left alone, the former pushed about the bottle, as one man will do by another when any designs are formed against his purse or his understanding.

Sir

Sir Frederick had watched the peer's looks, and saw his eyes following the steps of his daughter, as she left the room, with a mixture of tenderness and energy, that gave cause to hope the present opportunity would be as well as *another* to bring him to the destined confession; with which view he filled bumper after bumper, until he thought his lordship in a proper *cue* for sounding.

"Come, my Lord," said he, in a jocular tone, "I will give you a *sentiment*, which I am persuaded no widower in Britain would refuse to pledge;"—he drew towards him a larger glass than he had used before, which he made to run over, and, taking hold of Clarence's hand, he drank—"Let all the single be married, and let all the married be happy!"

"An excellent toast!" cried his lordship, "I double your libation!" and at one draught swallowed down a pint bumper of Madeira.

All might have done well, had the Baronet's scheme on the senses of his passive guest ended here; but in striving to captivate them *in toto*, he surrendered his own. They were differently affected, yet both too much crippled to enter the walk of business. Sir Frederick became capricious

capricious without meaning—the noble Peer, silent, without design: the former staggered off, with notes in his pocket for fifteen hundred pounds, to make *something* or *nothing* of them, at a noted gaming-house;—the latter found his way to the drawing-room, sat down by the side of Clarissa, and fell asleep.

If he was not before *exceedingly* desirable in the eyes of his mistress, his present ridiculous situation did not serve to render him more amiable. But so unlike to each other are the minds of women, that the same scene which disgusted Miss Isleworth delighted her mother and Lady Ann, who played a hundred tricks to rouse him from his stupor. Clarissa took no part in their amusement. Her mother would not permit her to retire, as she wished to have done; therefore she withdrew to a distant corner of the room, entertained herself with a book, and left them to pursue their frolicks on the inanimate corps of poor Lord Clarence.

Some of the many remedies they used to restore his senses at last took effect; he awaked in confusion not to be described—stammered out an apology—reeled towards Clarissa, and, against all possible resistance, imprinted on her fair hand
the

the feverish kifs of inebriety—then vanished out of the room, to which he returned no more.

C H A P. XVII.

WHICH HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE
TITLE OF THIS BOOK.

MR. CURRY had a country-house on Enfield Chase, to which he had taken his sister on her arrival from India, not more for the benefit of air, than to afford her that sort of agreeable solitude a rational woman, who has passed her grand climacteric, will always prefer to busy scenes of irrational dissipation.

Mrs. St. Edmonds was one of the few women who come under the description of *rational*: she distinguished *real* from counterfeit enjoyments, therefore chose the substance and rejected the shadow. She had been an excellent daughter—sister—wife, in defiance of the keen taunts with which fashion will ever ridicule those duties it does not sanction.

On the day of General St. Edmonds's death, the thirtieth year of their happy union was fully completed; twenty they had passed together in
the

the dominions of their prince, within the boundaries of Europe---the other ten was still devoted to the military service, but in another quarter of the globe, and with unabated ardour. Mrs. St. Edmonds accompanied her husband to Bengal, where his martial glory, and the mildness of his administration, will raise to his memory, in that country, a lasting monument of his valor, mercy, and justice: nor will it ever be forgotten by the inhabitants, that the brightest example of every female virtue was given them, in the irreproachable conduct of the beloved wife of their beloved governor.

To the residence of this lady Mr. Curry directed his steps, or rather the steps of his horses, as soon as the last conference between him and Sir Frederick Illeworth was brought to a conclusion; and how much it ended to the satisfaction of both parties has already been related.

It was almost dark before he got to Enfield. His sister, who expected and had waited dinner for him, began to be uneasy that he was not yet come: her imagination had been busy in forming a thousand accidents that might have befallen him; and the instant he stood before her she chid him, but with a sweetness peculiar to herself, for having so long made her suffer all the pains and penalties that fear, united to fancy, could invent for her torment.

Before he would enter on his defence, he desired dinner might be served, after which there would be time sufficient, he said, to satisfy all her inquiries.

A *tête-a-tête* is generally stigmatized by the appellation of stupid; and when made up of two lovers, who have loved long enough to love themselves out of love—or two fools, who are chained together by necessity—or two persons who call themselves friends, yet spend the hours which should be dedicated to the open frankness of friendship in suspecting each other, in locking up their thoughts, as they would do their riches, if a thief was at the door; in any or all such situations, the term *stupid* is but a poor epithet to express the apathy, folly, or wickedness, of which such *tête-à-têtes* are composed.

On the other hand, though such instances are to be produced, does it follow that two people, whose souls overflow with affection, and whose minds are stored with information—does it follow, I say, that *they* should grow tired of one another's society, merely because there is not a third person to listen to, or to join in their conversation? As well may we quarrel with nature, and say we cannot use our hands or our feet, because we had but *two* of a sort, and think *three* would have done better. If there are such discontented mortals, the amiable brother and sister
of

of whom I am speaking were certainly out of the number, as they would not have thought their destiny unpleasant, had they been condemned to feast a moiety of their hours on the food of their own eloquence, seasoned with that fraternal tenderness which gives a zest to all domestic entertainments.

“Well, now, my dear Elizabeth,” said Mr. Curry, the cloth being first removed, “I will tell you what the business was that detained me so late in London.”

“Oh! pray do,” she replied, “for there is something so mysteriously pleasant in your countenance, that I can assure you my curiosity *was* infinitely greater than my appetite.”

“Then, perhaps,” returned he, “you have already guessed that you are in part the cause of my playing the truant.”

“Me, brother, the cause!” repeated Mrs. St. Edmonds, how is that possible?”

“Yes, *you* sister; for I have this morning staid in town to make a purchase, which I hope to present very soon to your acceptance.”

“With all possible gratitude,” cried she, “I am really sorry you should have laid out your *money* on so improper a subject. I have already more finery than I know what to do with; and meant

to

to have asked your recommendation of some young woman, to whom a division of them may be useful."

"Well, well," said her brother, smiling, "perhaps I may do so when I am more at leisure; but the present I have bought for you this day is not to be set down amongst the *trifles* in your possession: you may judge of its value by its cost. What think you of one single jewel, for which I have advanced *two thousand* pounds, and call it the best bargain I ever made in my life."

"Heaven help me, brother!" exclaimed Mrs. St. Edmonds, "what is this riddle you call upon me to explain? I can form *no* idea of your meaning. A jewel that has cost you *two thousand* pounds! and this extravagant purchase made for *me*—for an old figure!—Oh! the tale is too ridiculous to gain credit! Dear George, speak to my understanding, and do not over-tax my credulity!"

"There is something," he replied, "so rational in your request, that I should forfeit my claim to candour if I did not tell you the whole honest truth, that you may no longer have cause to suppose I think *you* a fool, or give *you* still more reason to consider *me* as a puppy, unfit to be trusted with my own money or my *own* conduct.—Do you remember my little favourite Clarissa Isleworth?"

"Remember

“Remember her !” said she, “yes ; and at this distance of time I recall every sweet feature of her cherub face, with much more precision than I can recollect what I myself was thirty years ago. But what of this charming child ? I have often intended to ask you about her ; and yet, in the multiplicity of my own affairs, have as often forgot to interest myself in her’s : you cannot oblige me more than by informing me of her fate—I sincerely hope it has been a happy one.”

“Her *fate*,” he answered, “if marriage is to be considered its ultimatum, is not yet decided ; but, if you mean to ask after her present situation and pursuits, I have only to say, they are much of the same nature with those of other young women, whose misfortune it is to have a *fool* for their father, and a *coquette* for their *mother*.”

“Ah ! it is a thousand pities,” cried Mrs. St. Edmonds, sighing, “alas ! then I fear it is all over with your once amiable Clary !”

“I hope better things,” said her brother. “Whatever dross her pure mind may have imbibed from education or example, I expect your precepts will ratify hereafter : she is to be your guest for a few weeks, and *much* good may be done

donè in a *little* time. She has every propensity to those virtues which set your sex above all other works of the creation, and I think we shall find no great difficulty in calling them into action, though at present I believe they are of a negative species. *This*, my sister, is the jewel of which I boasted—this is the *purchase* I have made; for, in lending the father two thousand pounds that I may obtain the company of his daughter, I have ample cause to warrant my calling it a *gift*, rather than a *loan*! The spendthrift, who will not be just to himself, *can* not be equitable to others.”

“But, my good brother,” said Mrs. St. Edmonds, interrupting him, “are you sure I shall think *so* highly of your jewel as *you* do? or, that your bringing her to visit me will not diminish *from* rather than add *to* my comforts, which are, through your own kindness, already abundant? or, do you not know, that it is the hardest task in the world to domesticate a fine lady? To be plain with you, there is no animal in the creation, in my opinion, so little fitted for use or companionship, as the present modern *Misses*, springing from the present *modern* parents! My situation in India made me know much more of these troublesome girls than I desired *to* know. Mr. St. Edmonds and I were continually pestered
with

with recommendations. Several of them, whose birth was good and educations fashionable, we received not only under our patronage but under our roof;—allow me to add, that I never was better pleased, both on their accounts and my own, as when *they* got husbands, and *I* got rid of their society.

“I see you smile,” continued she, “but I have not done yet; let me say out *my* say, and then I will permit you to set aside all my objections—if *you can*. I am willing to agree with you, that Clarissa Isleworth *was* one of the loveliest, and the most amiable, and the most fascinating of children—that, *had* she remained under your tuition—*had* my dear sister lived long enough to assist you in finishing the work so happily begun, there could be no room for doubting her maturer years would have made good all the promises of infancy. On the contrary, taken from you at an age when young minds are most susceptible of right or wrong impressions, I think there is reason on *my* side for supposing, that all your *early* instructions were superseded by the precepts, and, what is still more forcible, the example of her butterfly mother, whose house if it cannot be called the *residence* of vice, must be considered as the occasional *receptacle* for the votaries of vice. After all, if you have, in your
intended

intended acquisition to your small family number, the goodness to consult *my* inclinations, I shall certainly accommodate them to *your* wish; but when a trial *is* made, I demand to resign the honour of Miss Isleworth's company, provided we should happen to be dissatisfied with each other."

"Read that letter, Elizabeth," cried the merchant, exultingly, presenting a paper which he had taken from his pocket-book at the beginning of this interesting explanation, "and let us see on what your unbiassed judgment will decide, without the interference of partiality.

She received it smilingly.

"You need not read it aloud," he added, "for I have read it many times, and remember all its contents. It was written in reply to some good advice, concerning *filial* obedience, which I bestowed upon her, finding she was more inclined to break through its laws than to observe them; when, six months ago, Lady Isleworth took it into her head to forbid me any intercourse with *her* family, the poor child applied to me for absolution, if she broke through the *rigid* interdiction.—I said, *No*. And now I make you a judge of her heart, by the answer she returned to my *decided* negative."

"Yes,

“ Yes, I shall love this girl, in spite of my former opinions!” muttered Mrs. St. Edmonds, speaking inwardly as she perused the letter, her fine though emaciated figure, and once beautiful countenance, receiving all the advantages that action and animation can impart, “ Yes, I shall certainly love her ! But, brother,” continued she, “ I am not content to keep all these pretty sentiments to myself.—I am *your* convert—we must read and admire them together.”

“ As you please,” returned he, visibly delighted; “ eloquence may sometimes tire, but goodness *never*.”——Then followed the epistle, which may be found in the next chapter.

CHAP. XVIII.

LETTER.

“ **W**HY, my dear Sir, will you command me
 “ to preserve *one* duty at the price of forfeiting
 “ *many* ? Without hardening my heart to the
 claims of *nature*, I am equally susceptible to
 those of *gratitude* !

“ And

“ And is it *you*—is it *really* you, who can so
 “ coldly, I was going to say *cruelly*, forbid me
 “ to throw myself at your feet, to confess my
 “ errors, perhaps—ah ! how cordial the hope !
 “ perhaps to have received your forgiveness ?—
 “ Will you not allow a simple girl, though led
 “ astray from the path into which you early con-
 “ ducted her, to reason with, to persuade you
 “ out of a purpose so afflicting ? Do not banish
 “ from your bosom *her* who will soon, I fear,
 “ have no refuge but in *your* protection ! Do
 “ not push off, on an ocean hard to weather, the
 “ poor little bark you sometimes delighted to
 “ deck with the ensigns of truth and rectitude !
 “ The lustre of these colours may have been
 “ tarnished, but are not yet *utterly* destroyed.—
 “ Condescend, only once more, to become the
 “ pilot of your *own* works, and, though sadly
 “ disordered, *your* regulation will restore them
 “ to order.

“ When you say you will *not* receive me at
 “ *your* house, though I should have the hardi-
 “ ness to visit there unsanctioned by my mo-
 “ ther ; or call on me at my father's, without
 “ it be in conformity with her *express* invita-
 “ tion ; when you add—My dear child, I will
 “ never teach you any lesson where the word
 “ *duty* is blotted by contention, much less
 “ where

“ where it is *obliterated* by *actual* disobedience,—
 “ had you considered, when you pronounced
 “ this *hard* sentence, to what a cruel necessity
 “ it reduced me—had you reflected on the ob-
 “ ligations of filial duty I owe to *yourself*, with
 “ the same impartiality that I *do*, you must have
 “ confessed, the sacrifice you would exact from
 “ me you did not expect I could perform with-
 “ out grief, without tears, without remon-
 “ strating ! I do *more* than remonstrate ; I write
 “ on my bended knees, and intreat, with all the
 “ fervour of which my heart is capable, that
 “ you will, as usual, admit to your presence,
 “ your most grateful, obedient, and dutiful
 “ daughter,

“ CLARISSA ISLEWORTH.”

“ You did not, it seems, comply,” said Mrs.
 St. Edmonds, “ with the prayer of your gentle
 petitioner ; how could you resist so pathetic a
 pleader ?”

“ I seldom retract from my word, because I
 seldom give it lightly,” he replied. “ I had
 well considered her situation—I would have laid
 down half my possessions to have saved her from
 unnecessary sorrow ; but, to fill her mind with
 present ease, I must also have stored it with
 food for future remorse. So I even sent her
 word

word to be a good girl—to depend on my fatherly affection—to keep up her spirits—perform her duty—and expect that I should lay hold on the first opportunity which presented itself, *without* infringement of established preliminaries, to reward the patience with which I *still* hoped she would submit to *my* injunctions.”

“Well, you are an extraordinary man!” returned his sister, “*so* much philosophy, *so* much sensibility, *so* much the slave of philanthropy, and yet *so* much the master of your reason! You have done well; I should not, I am sure, have done half so well. I know, from the eagerness that now springs up in my heart to embrace *your* favourite, that I must have opened my arms to have received her, had the application been made to *me* instead of yourself.”

“I am glad then,” said he, “that we are now *all* likely to be satisfied, without any body being to blame; and in less than three weeks, I have no doubt, I shall be able to present her to you.

“And I have no doubt,” she rejoined, “I shall love her quite as much as you do.

This

This sort of conversation, without fatiguing the two persons who supported it, lasted till Mrs. St. Edmonds's repeater announced a quarter past eleven o'clock, an hour not much respected by fashion, but friendly to invalids, in which class, we are sorry to say, this very amiable woman had long been numbered. Mr. Curry tenderly supported her to the door of her chamber, then retired to his own; and the next morning before she was stirring, again set off for the mart of business, leaving orders with the housekeeper to inform his sister, he should return the following day in time for dinner.

It is sometimes the case, that men who are *getting* or *spending* money, though equally eager in their diametrically opposite pursuit, will start aside from the *direct* road, whenever a temptation is held out, suppose it but in the shape of a feather, should the feather chance to tickle his fancy. To support which proposition I shall bring forward two instances:—*Arthur Isleworth* was stopped on *his* way to New-market, where it was ten to one he might have lost more than he had *to* lose, in less time than he took to indulge himself with the spectacle of two noted bruisers, met to break each other's bones in cold blood, on a match of fifty guineas; and our good merchant, when arrived at his house in
Bond-

Bond-street, was detained from *his* money-getting pursuits on the 'Change by a morning paper that lay on his table—he had not a moment to spare: Lady Isleworth's name, in capital letters, made him forget that he had not a moment to spare, and he read as follows:

“ Splendid preparations are making in Portman-square, by the supreme directress of elegance and fashion, *Lady Isleworth*, to celebrate the marriage of her eldest son with the only daughter and heiress of Lord Benvour. Her ladyship unites to the extremes of wit, personal charms, and various accomplishments—a dower of such magnitude as, it may be presumed, will soon lift her fortunate husband to a seat in the upper house. The writer of this article has the singular pleasure to add, that for expence, taste, and beauty, in the ball to be given on this occasion, Lady Isleworth will find herself, as usual, unrivalled by all her competitors.”

“ Astonishing !” cried the exasperated man of business, “ Astonishing folly ! which vaunteth itself in the *very* face of poverty and contempt: This rascally editor deserves bastinadoing ! Such inflammatory paragraphs as these are more efficacious in corrupting the
minds

minds of young women than *even* the example of their *own* mothers!" He thought also of his *two* thousand pounds, and calculated how far it was likely they would go to provide for Lady Isleworth's jubilee. Again remembered he had not a moment to spare—he hastened away to fulfil his engagements on 'Change.

CHAP. XIX.

STILL MORE CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH
THE TITLE-PAGE.

WHEN last we parted from Sir Frederick Isleworth, he was going with a giddy head and unsteady step towards the carriage, which was to conduct him, if not to the devil, at least into the very path which leads to his dominions.

The ruinous party had assembled before he joined them, yet he was *just* in time to undo himself. Faro being the game, his finances became so mangled between *great* and *little* figure,

gure, that, of fifteen hundred he carried out in the evening, he brought back in the morning no more than *one* single guinea, manfully resisting the overtures of despair to stay and witness the funeral obsequies of that one *also*.

As he rolled along the silent streets towards his comfortless home, not knowing what to do with *certain* reflections that threatened to be the companions of his short drive, he reclined his aching head against the side of the chariot, in which position he and they all fell asleep together. *Fancy*, a thousand times more flattering than *reality*, began to make herself very busy in repairing all that was amiss in the affairs of this *great* man: she rehearsed before him a scene very much calculated for his amusement—it was the funeral procession of his aunt Lady Bridget; and at the moment when a thundering rap at his own door forced the magic dame to drop the wand of her enchantments, her inactive victim was in possession of thirty times the sum he had left behind him at the gaming-house.

No more such visions gilded the downy pillow of repose; when, with an agitated mind and gloomy countenance, he sought for them in his own apartment. The goddess of fiction, offended at the little respect he paid to her officious

cious zeal, would not enter any more into his service; for, whilst his valet disrobed him, he vented curses on *all* dreams as well as *dreamers*, amongst which latter number he was not disinterested enough to forget himself. Without dwelling too long on one subject, we shall let Sir Frederick sleep out his nap with what appetite he may, and, with gentle violence, force back the repentant Lord Clarence on the stage of action.

“ It was a terrible solecism !” cried the Peer, when the next day he awakened to sense and recollection, “ I have certainly *done myself up* with Clarissa for ever ! What the devil should give me such an unconquerable *penchant* for shewing myself when drunk, to the very people in the world who I would wish to believe me *always* sober ! Well, the deed is done, and cannot be undone. I will go and take a peep into the eyes of my mistress ; and if I have offended past forgiveness, I turn my back on a family with which, Miss Isleworth excepted, I am not *very* deeply enamoured.”

In this accommodating state of mind, Lord Clarence shewed himself in Lady Isleworth’s breakfast-room, just as all the party had dispersed

VOL. I. F themselves

themselves, to follow what best suited their inclinations, Lady Ann excepted, who was trying to find out a riddle in the Ladies Pocket-book, the solution of which had occasioned some difficulties, when many heads as wise as her own were united to solve them. She remained alone to receive his lordship; and so artfully managed the opportunity of a *tête-à-tête*, that, by passing over the little irregularity of which he professed himself guilty the preceding night, with more *nonchalance* than he thought, or in fact than it really did deserve—by treating his foibles with indulgence, and by magnifying his pretensions to applause, she led him on to search for those *agreements* in herself which, with the eyes of a lover, he had hitherto considered the sole property of but *one* woman in the world, and that woman Clarissa Isleworth.

The more he looked and listened, the more he was confirmed that he had mistaken the object, and that beauty, wit, taste, and goodness, were all centered in the wife of her brother!—Of which truth he became so fully persuaded, that on the entrance of his once adored mistress, he paid his compliments with an air of indifference almost as frigid as her own.

Sir Frederick, though involved in his own perplexities, and Lady Isleworth, though her head
was

was running round on the pivot of a thousand splendid chimeras, neither of them could help observing one day, and many following ones, that Clarissa lost ground with the Earl, and that Lady Ann engrossed the greater share of his attention. Sir Frederick *said* he would speak to his daughter; Lady Isleworth *talked* of hastening her ball; and on this *one* point they were both agreed, *that* his lordship should *not* slip through their fingers, if there was any possibility of holding him fast. Each determined to pursue their own plan in their own way—Sir Frederick to *reason*, and his lady to *dance* the poor Clarissa out of her *prejudices*, for to her shyness was placed the whole crime of her noble lover's desertion.

“Child!” said Sir Frederick, darting a stern and scrutinizing look on the blushing downcast countenance of his daughter, when she obeyed the summons which brought her to his closet, “Child! I command you to tell me, without *prevarication*, what you have done to offend *my* friend Lord Clarence?”

“Me, papa! nothing in the world that I know of. Does his Lordship accuse me of disrespect?”

“No, he does not *complain*; but it is *too* visible to your mother and myself how *much* his behavi-

our is changed within the last week, and you *must* have been to blame!"

"Dear Sir, what is my fault? or what do you conceive it to be? Pray keep me not in suspense, but *tell* me my errors, and I will *try* to amend them,"

"Your *errors*, indeed! it would be well if you had nothing worse to account for."

"What then is my crime?"

"The crime of disobedience! Know, ungrateful girl! that even in the *lifetime* of the late countess I had *fixed* my mind on *your* succeeding to *that* station of honor; and, since her death, will you *pretend* not to have taken notice with what *anxiety* I have been *labouring* to bring about this great event? Do you forget, also, with what avidity my Lord was running into *my* toils, before *your* damned airs of scornful prudery drove him back, and distanced all my views for your establishment? These airs, Madam, *you* are pleased to call *errors*; I call them sins! capital sins against common sense, against *my* interest, and against your *own*. Therefore, I command you to get rid of them as fast you can, and reform your manners, or, by——," and he swore a tremendous oath

oath—"if I am obliged to look out for another husband for you, it shall not be a young handsome man like Clarence, but I will *force* you into the arms of any old fellow who can serve my purpose, though one half of his limbs should be torn from the weather-beaten trunk, and the other half in a state of dislocation, No answering—no answering!" continued he, raising his voice, as he saw her trying to collect a reply from amongst her ideas, which his violence had unsparingly scattered, "I will hear nothing that you can say in your defence. I tell you again, you *must* have affronted Lord Clarence: so go and dress to the best advantage—*look* tenderly on him—*act* like the rest of your sex—*flirt* with him—lay our new lures to catch his attention—do *any* thing to revive his affection—or dread a father's displeasure."

He turned upon his heel, flapped the door after him, and left his daughter, not the more in love with Lord Clarence for the sentence she had received at the parental bar of judgment.

CHAP. XX.

WAYS AND MEANS.

DELIGHTED with his newly adopted system of terror, extremely flattering in promise, Sir Frederick left his daughter, and went to seek for his wife, whom he knew he should find at the board of green cloth, amusing Arthur's bride with a little *chicken* picquet, to pass away an idle hour before an dressing time.

Lady Ann had just ran off to her chamber in a pretended pet with her bad luck, though, by her own account, her losses were only twenty, and by that of her antagonist no more than ten shillings.

Lady Isleworth was employing the few remaining solitary moments in telling her own fortune on the cards; she had cut them three times—wished Lord Clarence might *speak out* on the night he was to be the partner of Clarissa at her ball—and the nine of hearts, unerring prognostic of success, had actually made its appearance, when the entrance of Sir Frederick called

led from her this extatic exclamation.—“ I have got my wish, and Miss Isleworth will soon be Countess of Clarence !”

“ Has my Lord,” cried her husband, “ told you so ?”

“ Oh no ! but here is the *nine of hearts*, and see by what enchanting cards it is every way surrounded !”

Instead of reproving his wife’s folly, he gave a new specimen of his own, by supposing she would allow his superiority in planning, when he should have unfolded to her incurious inattentive ear what had just been passing between himself and his daughter.

Lady Isleworth thought of nothing but the critical ball—it must be hastened—*that* alone could or would ever bring back the retreating lover—dancing exposed a thousand charms, which would otherwise lie concealed, or at least only peep out from behind a veil of awkward reserve to *very* little advantage. And it was thus she reasoned.

“ In the name of nature ! my dear, is there a man in the world who can preserve his stoicism

cism when assailed by an host of temptations? The touch of a soft hand—the glance of an eye—the blush of exercise—the graces of attitude—all, all, every thing, I do *insist* upon it, is in favour of the ball! You cannot dispute it, Sir Frederick!”

At any other time, when he had not wanted her assistance to raise the needful, Sir Frederick would most surely have disputed, but now it became him to be passive, until she began very severely to reprehend him for having treated Clarissa with rigour, “when you know,” said she “how much the beauty of her countenance depends on the quantity of animation she may be able to throw into it; and now, since you have talked to her so seriously, I suppose she must be transformed into a perfect Melpomene, or at best a red-eyed Magdalen. However, all may not yet be lost—I shall try, by my indulgence, to restore what you have taken from her.”

Sir Frederick, roused to resentment by these illiberal reflections on his understanding, persisted that his measures were the best. A warm debate ensued; in the very paroxysm of which her ladyship demanded an *immediate* and large supply of cash, that all due *force* might be given to *her* experiment: which demand, so far from building up the breach which a difference of opinion

opinion had made between them, was answered only by a *positive* refusal of compliance, leaving the state of their *tempers* in almost as ruinous a condition as their *circumstances*; nor was it till her ladyship had vented in tears and sobs, the most troublesome particles of her passion, that she was capable of devising new *ways* and *new* means to evade the consequences of a disappointment which threatened to destroy the whole of her air built fabrick—for *without* money there could be no *ball*, and *without* a ball, she was equally convinced there could be no *possible* way of fixing Lord Clarence.

In this disconsolate humour she went to her dressing-room—shut the door—threw herself down on a rich sofa—and wept bitterly.

On this same luckless morning her ladyship received from Staffordshire two letters; one from a former governess to her children, who, having married a curate, afterwards settled in that county, to whom Lady Isleworth, eighteen months before, sent her second and third daughters, both verging on womanhood—not so much for instruction in the whole *duties* of *woman*—not so much with the design of conveying cultivation to those female accomplishments which, some how or other, had been altogether totally

neglected—as because, according to her maternal reasoning, and in conformity to the present custom, it was thought best to keep them out of harm's way till their eldest sister had made her market. How convenient—how consistent these plans, for the race of existing mothers to adopt! What if so many charming daughters, all produced on the stage of life in the same scene, should not interfere with their own claims to admiration, yet, may, they not cross the path of each other's preferment? It is the part of prudent matrons to prevent such misfortunes; and I suppose it to be for this very reason we so often see one of the long brood flying about the world at her own discretion, and hear of half a dozen more, equally capable of the same womanly excursions, who are locked up in their nurseries.

Having introduced the writer of one letter, it is only to be added, that the other came from the pen of Miss Arabella, her ladyship's second daughter, who had just entered into the nineteenth year of her confinement. Let us see, then, if there is to be found, in the contents of either or both of these epistles, any thing to exonerate Lady Isleworth from the charge of being, like too many of her *sex* and *kind*, put
out

out of humour by trifles even lighter than themselves.

“Honored Madam,

“I think it my duty to inform your Ladyship, that the young ladies are in want of many things they cannot do without, particularly shoes, stockings, and petticoats, besides linen of *all* sorts: and as to Miss Matilda, she has outgrown all her frocks, so that they are quite above her knees—two of them only are in tolerable repair, the rest, I assure your Ladyship, are not fit to be seen; so that if I am to be honored with the company of the ladies *much* longer, I hope your Ladyship will take it into your consideration to order them new cloaths of every sort.

“I hope also that your Ladyship will forgive our officiousness, for my husband and I have procured them a writing-master, to attend ever since they have been in the country: to be sure your Ladyship did not *say* that it should be so; but then *we* thought it a pity, as Miss Arabella had got into joinhand before she came to us, that she should forget all that had been taught her, for want of practice.

“There

" There are now fifteen pounds due for their
 " teaching; which money Mr. Standish would
 " be very proud to receive from your Ladyship,
 " as he has a sickly wife, and seven sirall chil-
 " dren. I wish it had been in our power to have
 " paid him without troubling your Ladyship;
 " but my *poor* husband, though he serves
 " two churches, and rides like a post-boy from
 " one to the other every Sunday, yet his labours
 " on horseback and in the pulpit produce him
 " no more than seventy pounds a year; which
 " is all we have in the world, except my for-
 " mer *wages*, which are in your Ladyship's
 " hands, as well as the hundred and twenty
 " pounds that you agreed to pay us for the
 " board of the young ladies, at the rate of forty
 " pounds a year for each of them.

" We have now had the happiness of their
 " good company eighteen months; and my *poor*
 " Mr. Trotter, who is more puzzled in mak-
 " ing both ends than in composing a hundred
 " sermons, all fit to be preached before the bi-
 " shop, (for indeed his learning is much great-
 " er than his profit); for these reasons, my La-
 " dy, poor Mr. Trotter would hold himself ever-
 " lastingly obliged to your Ladyship's goodness
 " for the whole, or any part of the debt due to
 " him: the butcher and baker have not seen the
 " colour

“ colour of *his* money since Michaelmas; so
 “ that their bills must be much longer than our
 “ purses, if your Ladyship’s kindness does not
 “ help us out.

“ The young ladies have very charming ap-
 “ petites, and much good may it do them.

“ There is a trifle, my Lady, that I did not
 “ wish to communicate, for fear it might vex
 “ your Ladyship; but Mr. Trotter will have
 “ it, that it is his *duty* and mine to let your La-
 “ dyship into *every* thing, that worse may not
 “ happen; for, to be sure, as he says, it would
 “ be no desirable match between the daughter
 “ of a baronet and the son of a farmer.

“ You must know then, my Lady, since it
 “ *must* come out, that Miss Matilda has, for se-
 “ veral weeks, been in an oddish melancholy
 “ sort of a way; her chearfulness (for she used
 “ to be as merry as a bee) all of a sudden went
 “ off, God knows how! and Mr. Trotter obser-
 “ ved, that it was likely she might fall into a
 “ consumption, as she had got a habit of sigh-
 “ ing, God knows for what!

“ At last Mr. Trotter, who has more pene-
 “ tration than most parsons, threw out some
 “ hints

" hints to me in confidence, as if he thought
 " Miss Matilda had fallen in love with some bo-
 " dy or other; upon which we began to think
 " of all the young gentlemen who came to
 " church, or called in at the parsonage: and at
 " first we suspected it to be Mr. Ramble, our
 " attorney's clerk, because all ladies think him
 " very handsome; but I said, on second thoughts,
 " I did not suppose it could be him, for that
 " Miss Arabella seemed to delight in his compa-
 " ny much more than her sister. " Well then,"
 " said Mr. Trotter, for he hit it off in a mo-
 " ment, " I will be hanged if she has not a kind-
 " nefs for young Russell, whose father rents the
 " great tithes of the vicar."

" I wonder I had not thought of him myself;
 " for now I remembered he was a more comely
 " youth than Mr. Ramble, of the same age with
 " Miss Matilda, and that she was mighty fond
 " of hearing him play upon the flute. Mr.
 " Trotter told me he would watch them better
 " in future; and yesterday, my Lady, he surpri-
 " sed them walking together, with Mr. Russell's
 " arm thrown about Miss Matilda's waist.
 " They did not know that any body had seen
 " them: so, if your Ladyship pleases, we should
 " be glad not to have *our* names mentioned as
 " informers, for the young lady would never
 " forgive

“forgive us; besides, the Russels are people of
 “substance, and our very good neighbours. I
 “remember to have often heard your Ladyship
 “declare, that time was more precious to you
 “than any thing else: so, begging your pardon
 “for having taken up so much of it, I remain,
 “my Lady, your Ladyship’s most humble and
 “dutiful servant,

“ALICE TROTTER.”

And what were the emotions that agitated the maternal bosom of Lady Isleworth,—on being pretty plainly informed that both her daughters were naked—one of them in love, to a *certainly*, with the farmer’s son—and the other *apparently* ready to form a similar attachment with the attorney’s clerk?

Why, she betrayed no emotions at *all*, her thoughts being otherwise employed; and looking in the glass, just as she had carelessly cast her eyes over Mr. Trotter’s morsel of eloquence she saw her woman misplacing her cap, when every thing she possessed of *feeling* was exerted in the reprimands she bestowed on Harris for her awkwardness, and in disposing the ornament to greater advantage.

The alteration being effected to her entire approbation, her temper returned in its usual
 placidity

placidity, when, leaving the governess's letter open on the toilet, she proceeded to examine the other, which, being from her daughter, was not the first to make a claim on her attention.

The only notice taken of Mrs. Trotter's expostulation, or information, was muttering something about *impertinence* in asking for *cloaths*, when the children were confined in a country place, where they could see *nobody*—besides calling the curate and his wife a couple of fools, for troubling *her* with *their* wife observations on a boy and girl's playful rambles through the fields together,

Miss Arabella's writing or orthography were neither of them the *most* perfect of their *kind*; yet Lady Isleworth so rapturously admired the spirited composition, that she several times broke out into short plaudits, such as—charming!—how animated!—another self! Then laughing very heartily, she afterwards read aloud the entertaining epistle with which she was so highly diverted, to convince her attendant that the mirth it excited was natural, willing to justify the *effect* by making her a sharer in the *cause*.

Condescensions of this sort were not very unfrequent, and Harris listened with her usual avidity

dity, declaring it was *vastly* fine, *vastly* witty, *vastly* clever indeed! and should have wondered how *so* young a lady could put such things together; if *genius* had not run in the *blood* of the family, *particularly* on the side of her ladyship.

A compliment *so* aptly conceived met with a gracious welcome, as will, I hope, the bright occasion from whence it originated: but, whilst laying this extraordinary letter before my readers, if mothers, let me caution them not to think less favourable of their own nurselings, though they should not come near the stand of Miss Bell's literary accomplishments; let them first consider what pretensions they have to expect prodigies in their female issue? *Rare* *ripes* are not always the produce of attention; *such* fruit has its seed more generally in *nature*, though it may be forced by education. Let us proceed to the specimen.

CHAP. XXI.

NURSERY WIT IN A YOUNG LADY OF NINETEEN.

" DEAR MAMA,

" **MATILDA** and I think it very odd that we
" should be kept here in this nasty, dirty, stupid
" place, till we are grown almost over the hed-
" ges, and nearly as tall as the chimnies belong-
" ing to the hut of prim parson Trotter.

" Indeed it is quite shocking ! What does it
" signify to be women, and pretty women too, if
" we are for ever to be made obedient to the laws
" of restraint ?—to be treated like mere babies !
" —to put our hands before us, curtesying every
" time we come in or go out of the room, with
" a *Miss* you *must* not do *this*, that, and the other !
" You never saw any thing, mama, half so tor-
" menting in all your life !

" I am sure, for my part, I would be glad to
" exchange situations with Harris ; for then I
" should have the pleasure of looking at you,
" when I had made you as fine as a queen ; and
" afterwards,

“ afterwards, when I could see you no longer, nor
 “ be entertained by peeping out at the window to
 “ watch all the coaches and chairs that stop at
 “ your door, how delighted I should be in tum-
 “ bling over all your charming new things, and
 “ instructing myself in the latest fashions !

“ Instead of these *diversions*, we are condem-
 “ ned, from morning till night, to the drudgery
 “ of working, or reading, or hearing lectures ; for
 “ though the parson preaches four times on a
 “ Sunday, yet he does not think that enough, but
 “ makes shift to shuffle out every day a sort of ser-
 “ mon, for our private edification ; which there
 “ would be no bearing, if Matilda and I did not
 “ contrive to cheat the old gentleman, by falling
 “ asleep in the midst of his palavering ; then we
 “ are made to kneel down, night and morning, to
 “ say *family* prayers, in a hole of a parlour not so
 “ large as your dinner table, where, to increase
 “ our inconveniencies, a great staring vulgar
 “ maid-servant makes one of the party—so that
 “ when we are all down I actually have not room
 “ to move my elbows, and if they should grow to
 “ my sides it will be no wonder. Oh ! dear
 “ mama, only think of our condition !

“ Our governess, I believe, does not like these
 “ sort of things any more than *we* do ; but that
 “ does

“ does *us* no good, because the fright of a parson
 “ always will have his own way. She once did
 “ go *so* far as to *insist*, that having Martha in to
 “ prayers with Sir Frederick Isleworth’s *daughters*
 “ was mixing them with very *improper* company.
 “ And what do you think, mama, was his inso-
 “ lent answer? Truly, he said, “ whatever *she*
 “ might take into *her* head about distinctions, in
 “ performing our *duties* to God *one* person was as
 “ acceptable as *another*.” Did you ever hear of
 “ such a poor, ignorant, ill-bred savage, not to
 “ know the difference of *rank*, and rudely to
 “ affront one, by saying to one’s face one is no
 “ better than his dirty drab of a servant !

“ Oh, dear !—Oh, dear ! what a happy crea-
 “ ture is Clarissa ! going about every where—
 “ making conquests every day—courted by every
 “ body—flattered by every body—and, as you
 “ tell me, mama, just going to be married, to
 “ have a *coronet* on her coach, and to do whate-
 “ ver she pleases !

“ Now, for my part, mama, I do not want to
 “ be married *immediately*, but I do very much
 “ wish you would send for us home, that we may
 “ be bride maids. Mrs. Trotter gives me some
 “ comfort, by saying it is very likely you will
 “ have us to be present at the ceremony, and that
 “ witnessing

“witnessing Clary’s wedding may be a step to-
 “wards our own.

“Dear, sweet mama! pray take compassion
 “on the dreariness of our dismal prison, or pre-
 “pare to hear we have hung ourselves in spite
 “and vexation! Upon my word, that might
 “have been our fate long ago, if, amongst the
 “rustics which form our *monstrous* society, there
 “had not been two families, a *little* better than
 “the rest—one an attorney, the other a sort of
 “farmering gentleman.

“We are all fond of music to distraction; and
 “the *young* folks that belong to the *old* ones,
 “doing what they can to keep us alive, we have
 “hitherto been prevented from an act of despera-
 “tion which your cruelty, dear mama, will not
 “fail to compleat. Therefore, pray send your
 “carriage for us, or order us to come to town
 “in the stage *immediately*: nay, if you chuse that
 “I should take the journey on foot, *even* with-
 “out shoes, I shall joyfully set out on the pilgri-
 “mage, and cripple onward as fast as I can, to
 “prove how much, dear mama, I am your obe-
 “dient and dutiful daughter,

“ISABELLA ISLEWORTH.”

Whatever pleasantry the perusal of this witty
 composition had at first created in the ideas of
 Lady

Lady Isleworth, was wholly dispersed in her succeeding interview with Sir Frederick—so intirely dissipated, that, after having flown from the sight of her barbarous *tyrant*, it was a very long time before she could rally her scattered spirits to any settled point of contrivance. Now, all good financiers well *know*, that the *head* should be *cold*, and the *thoughts* collected, *when* a national or private debt *must* be contracted, *for which* the minister, the man, or the woman, has no security to offer.

Reduced to this terrible dilemma, unknowing what to do, which way to turn, or where to look for redress, her distracted ladyship sent down word to her hardly less deranged family, that, being suddenly indisposed, they must sit down to dinner without her.

This message alarmed none of the party except Clarissa, who immediately ran up to enquire what was the matter. She tried the door—it was locked; she asked admittance, but was refused entrance, with an authoritative command that she should directly return to the company, and not tease a poor invalid with insignificant questions.—Miss Isleworth reluctantly obeyed.

“Well, child, what ails mama?” whispered Lady Ann, seeing Clarissa return so soon, “are
we

we going to have a little brother or sister palmed upon us? or is it only a fit of the vapours?"

"I have not seen my mother," replied Miss Isleworth, "she is disposed to rest, and I would not disturb her."

"Oh! you dear little *prude!*" said her gay ladyship, "this caution is even more indefensible than your *step by step* advances to poor Clarence."

She still spoke in a low tone, but not *so* low as to prevent his Lordship now always stationary at her elbow, from hearing himself named; and, catching hold of her hand with lover-like gallantry, he swore it should be his prisoner, till he knew how far *he* was concerned in the secret carrying on between her and Miss Isleworth.

"Shall I tell him?" cried Lady Ann, laughing.

"For your *own* sake, I should hope *not*," replied Clarissa, whose complexion had before displayed, on its pure white, the crimson flag of displeasure, and, rising from her seat, she retired to another part of the room, where her father was

was amusing himself with a book on calculation, chances, and odds.

Lady Illeworth found her conquered spirits, considerably reinforced, after eating half a boiled chicken, and drinking three glasses of Madeira. It happened, whilst thus employed, that a lucky expedient crossed her labouring brain—vanity gave it birth, and necessity nurtured it:—thus it was brought about.

She could not remember ever before to have shed a sufficient number of tears at one time, to convince herself whether the poet's observation, that they are becoming to beauty, extended to her own particular cast of features. To justify her curiosity on this head, she threw her streaming eyes on the dressing-glass, a monitor more *faithful* than *flattering*; she was disgusted with the truths it uttered—she started at the blotted countenance it presented—but more at the inroads which sorrow liquidated had made on the artificial bloom of her complexion.

The rouge was at hand—she hastily repaired the damage her cheeks had sustained—banished care from her mind—and invited smiles to her face, crying out, “How absurd! Can the foe of animation be the friend of beauty?”

A few

A few false gems that sparkled on her bosom next attracted her attention: "Ah!" exclaimed she, "had I but the *substance* in *my own* possession of these paltry shadows, I might still be happy!" It was then that the lucky thought occurred how she might get at the originals, and to what a charming use she might convert them.

Having digested the whole plan, and re-assumed her usual gaiety, Lady Isleworth descended from her dressing-room; and, when she joined the festive circle below, was quite as good company as if nothing had happened to disturb her; nor could the nicest observer have distinguished any leading features of gloom, discontent, or resentment, by which to have traced her late *fracas* with Sir Frederick.

CHAP. XXII.

VEXATION ON VEXATION.

NOTWITHSTANDING the total privation of money, every thing went on as swimmingly

mingly in Portman-square as if the treasury itself had been opened to supply the wants and wishes of Lady Isleworth, who, at an enormous expence, contrived, by filling her house with dinner and supper parties, to make Lady Ann's confinement at home less insupportable, Sir Frederick having declared it against all *etiquette*, that his daughter-in-law should exhibit *en bride*, until Lord Benvour had sanctified her hasty nuptials, to which event he looked forward with the most sanguine expectation; for, in defiance of their former quarrel on the subject of this union, when only in the embryo, he had himself condescended to mediate between the *offended* and *offenders*; nor did his Lordship's silence to a very laboured epistle in the least discourage his hopes of a speedy reconciliation.

Already had Arthur Isleworth been absent from town ten days, and no body seemed to regret his desertion less than Lady Ann herself. "What does it signify?" she would say, "Am I *not* married to the man? So whether he is here or there, he *must* drag his chain after him."

Lady Isleworth adored her spirit, but Sir Frederick called it levity. Perhaps this appellation proceeded from the humour of the moment; for at the moment it escaped him various causes had
combined

combined to make him see people and things through the medium of fretfulness. His agreeable friend, Mrs. Snug, had *that* morning eloped with a younger man than himself: on *that* morning the member of a body corporate, by whose *influence* or *avarice* he had obtained a seat in Parliament seven years before, came to him, with the mortifying tidings that a weighty opponent was already in the field, and showering gold, like dust, upon the palms of his constituents—observing, that there was no other method of stopping the progress of this new candidate, than by out-doing him in his own way; and concluded with a hint, that a brace of thousands, conveyed, through him, to his brethren of the corporation, might insure his interest. But, had it insured his salvation, Sir Frederick could not have raised the *fine* demanded; no, nor the twentieth part, if one hundred only would have saved him from perdition. He had therefore nothing to give the greedy messenger but *good* words, and nothing to send by him to his brethren but *fair* promises!—a mighty old-fashioned coin, which, in the present age of trifles, loses all pretensions to currency.

Besides these sources of vexation, another cause had presented itself on the same morning, which filled the Baronet's mind with more in-

flammable matter than all the rest of his crosses ; it was a short answer to a long letter, couched in the following terms.

“ SIR,

“ I congratulate you and your family on your
“ alliance to the noble house of Benvour ; and
“ hope the *honor* you may derive from the con-
“ nection will compensate for the inconveni-
“ ence of being encumbered with an unma-
“ nageable, unportioned young woman of qua-
“ lity. *Your* son has robbed *me* of what I can
“ very well spare, *an* undutiful daughter. I
“ send then neither my blessing nor my curse ;
“ but mark me, Sir Frederick, I give *you* this
“ irrevocable assurance, *that* if a guinea might
“ save your whole race from destruction I would
“ *not* advance it—by my life ! nor bequeath it
“ at my death. To-morrow I enter into a
“ second engagement, from which I hope to have
“ children more deserving of my love than La-
“ dy Ann Isleworth. For the last time, I have
“ the honour to subscribe myself,

“ Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ BENVOUR.”

This letter, with many others, had lain some hours on the breakfast table, before the family assembled themselves together. Lady Ann tof-
fed

fed them over one by one, and at last came to that which, by the superscription, she knew to be her father's, though, whether intended as a mark of contempt, or proceeding from accident, he had not stamped the envelope either with his name or his coronet.

"Ho, ho!" cried she, "this comes from my Lord Huffy Gruffy, and no doubt contains an earthquake that will blow us all into the third heaven."

"Is my Lord any relation of your Ladyship's?" asked her mother-in-law; for Sir Frederick had not yet made his appearance, being shut up in another room with his friend the Alderman.

This question had such an effect on the risible faculties of Lady Ann, that, in a fit of laughter, next to convulsive, she shouted out, "Dear Madam! is it possible that you should not understand Huffy Gruffy and Lord Benvour are one and the same person?"

Lady Isleworth broke out into raptures at the explanation, declaring her a first-rate *belle esprit*; and that whether Lord Huffy Gruffy might be kind or cruel, her son Arthur would be sufficiently

ently rich in a wife *so* highly accomplished, and his family but *too* happy in being allied to *her* graces and *her* talents. "Indeed," added she, "I wish almost his lordship may hold back his pardon for a little time, just to give us *all* an opportunity of shewing our perfect and disinterested gratitude."

"Well; but my dear Lady Isleworth," replied the wife of Arthur, who sat twisting her father's letter into every sort of form, to get at the contents, "suppose, as we are now all *one* family, and Sir Frederick not present, do you think he would be *very* angry if I should break the seal, merely to take a *peep* at *my* papa? for, to tell you the truth, I am really dying with impatience."

"Oh, to be sure!" was the giggling reply, "it is downright impossible he should chide your *amiable* curiosity." Clarissa, on the contrary, used a few unsuccessful arguments, why she ought to suspend her inclination a little longer, offering to go and seek for her father.

"No, no; sit still, child," said her mother, nor *presume* to check the wishes of your all-charming sister!"

"I would

“ I would bet this magic bauble,” cried Lady Ann, twirling her wedding-ring on the table, “ *she* would not do what I am going to do for the whole universe—open a letter not directed to herself,” and, as she spoke, applied her fingers to the seal; but, before it divided, Sir Frederick shewed himself. “ Hush !” she exclaimed, “ not a word about my *wicked* intentions.” She then presented it to him, with the wax unbroken—told him from whence it came—and intreated that he would instantly read it aloud, for the edification of *all* whom it might concern.

Her Ladyship thus gave him the hardest task he had ever been employed to execute, so busy were his hopes and fears in filling up his harassed mind with all the rubbish of desperate anxieties. *Should* the Peer be propitious, his son, his fortune, his pending election, *all* would do well; but *vice versa*, and his fine prospects must fall to the ground—his son is ruined, his fortune spent, and his election lost! Is it then a matter of wonder that, as he hastily swallowed Lord Benvoir’s favoury mess of poison, the very ratbane of his better expectations, his nerves, his sight, his speech should be affected—that his hands should tremble, his eye balls start, and his tongue falter—or that, throwing
the

the letter from him, he should bounce out of the room with quivering lips, and suppressed execrations?

"Why, what is the matter now?" cried Lady Ann, "Sir Frederick seems *prodigiously* dissatisfied! I am confident my father is *much* meeker than I could suppose *possible*."

"Oh! never mind *Sir Frederick*," replied his lady, "we shall all do mighty well *by and bye*:—but, my dear, I hope you have prepared a bridal dress for your appearance on Thursday?"

"Now would I give any thing in the world, *but* my youth and my beauty," said Lady Ann, "to know who it will be."

"Of what are you thinking?" asked Lady Isleworth; "perhaps of the happy man who will be honored with your fair hand on Thursday?"

"Nothing about it," she replied; "so far from thinking of a partner for myself, I can only guess—guess—guess, and all to no purpose, who *can* be the *maiden* or the *widow* that consents,

fents, at such *short* notice, to lead up the matrimonial dance with my *hobbling* papa?"

"Come, come, be more serious, my little giddy friend," said the *sage* matron, "his lordship only *threatens*, depend on it; he will never *do so silly* an action. I beg you will think no more of it; but answer me *soberly*."

"Have you chose your colour and your ornaments? for I have told Sir Frederick that *no* power *upon* earth shall make me put off my ball."

"Dear Madam," returned Lady Ann, shrugging her shoulders, "how should I chuse *silks* or *ornaments*? Why, don't you know I have not a guinea in the world? Arthur has taken all the contents of my purse to Newmarket, from whence I expect but a doomsday account of either my *man* or my *money*?"

"I beg your pardon," cried the mother of *that* man, "I shall send *my* people of business for your Ladyship's *orders*, and must hold myself for ever disoblighd should you spare *any* sort of expence, suited to the daughter of Lord Ben-vour and the wife of Mr. Isleworth."

Whilst Lady Ann returned thanks for this *very* broad commission, to derange, if *possible*, the family affairs more than they were deranged *before*, she saw, from the window, Lord Clarence, indolently strolling down the square; her hat was on—she invited Clarissa to go out with her, *that* they might *seize* on him before he entered the house, and make him walk with them in the garden. Miss Isleworth would have disregarded Lady Ann's invitation; but a look from her mother, indicating that her displeasure would be the consequence of a refusal, made her comply with the unpleasant requisition.

CHAP. XXIII.

FASHIONABLE INVOLVEMENTS CONTRASTED WITH CHEAP LIVING.

LADY ISLEWORTH was, in reality, more hurt than she appeared to be, when Sir Frederick withdrew so abruptly from the breakfast table, not that she *very* much concerned herself

self about the *occasion* of his displeasure, but, having, brought him into good humour, she did not like to see him re-discomposed, having always before her eyes the fear that he might relapse into a fit of obstinacy, become unmanageable, and force her to relinquish the *ball*, now within eight days of completion;—cruel misfortune! the more to be apprehended, because she thought it probable, though extremely silly, that he might conceive it *too* great a compliment paid to Lord *Benvour*, if they should make any *extraordinary* parade on account of *his* daughter. “Heaven help me!” cried she, “if he should take such a crotchet into his head, positively we are all undone!” and away she tripped, to prevent, if possible, the threatened danger.

She found the *dreaded* master of *her* revels in his study: he was neither reading nor writing, but stretched upon his back at full length, on three stools, which, for the greater bodily ease, he had formed into a sort of sofa—his tortured mind rolling in agony, for which there could be invented no posture of repose—his eyes were closed—his clenched hands rested on his forehead—and, as she entered the room, a groan saluted her ears, which might have been supposed to come from a disconsolate malefactor when taking
his

his last view of the world, followed by an exclamation so furious, as greatly terrified, and had nearly driven her back, without endeavouring to establish her purpose; but it was *too* late—he heard the door open, and demanded who was there?

“It is only *me*,” said his lady, gaining courage. “What, in the name of wonder! Sir Frederick, could make you frighten *poor* Lady Ann, by flying from us in *such* an *unaccountable* manner?”

“*Poor* Lady Ann!” he retorted, lifting himself a little up, and resting on his elbow, “*poor* indeed!—damn’d *poor*! Arthur has made a fine hand of it!”

“Pish! *you* love to look on the dark-complexioned side of *every* thing: I wish, like *me*, you would think that *all* happens for the best.”

“And I wish, *Madam*, you would explain how it *can* be for the best, that *I* and *my* family should be beggared to maintain the *coquetish* daughter of ——”

“Hold! my dear,” cried her ladyship, “on this score I *must* beg leave to interrupt you: Lady
dy

dy Ann is, *without* dispute, the *most* elegant, *most* polite, *most* accomplished woman that *you* or *I* have seen on the town since we were first married."

Lady Isleworth did not always speak after a pattern; and she here made use of a phrase seldom coupled with *nobility*. Sir Frederick caught it up with ill-natured spitefulness, and replied, "I never heard that she had been *on the town*, but her *talents* and her *poverty* may bring her *there* at last, and not a *curse* shall I care;—let *Arthur* look to *that*."

"But why—why Sir Frederick will you put yourself out of temper for *trifles*? I do protest I have the *bigest* opinion of Lady Ann; I am *sure* that she will rank with the very first of *fashionable* wives; and Arthur may be the *happiest* of husbands, if it is not his *own* fault."

"Then," replied he, sneeringly, "your *hopeful* offspring must be of the camelion breed; for, if he cannot live upon air, he must be as miserable a dog as his father. Harkye, Madam!—if *I* lose *my* election, as it is ten to one that I shall, having no means left to secure it, my *next* step must be to the Bench."

"God

“ God forbid !” cried her ladyship, giving her voice the tone of alarm, whilst her face and her smiles retained all their charming store of *nonchalance*, “ If you would be but a *little* more reasonable, I *could* open *such* prospects to *your* view as would make you laugh at your own *hysterical* fancies.”

“ Could any thing excite me to mirth, it would be your folly, my dear. What, pray, is the *raree show* your *ingenuity* has prepared to cheat *me* out of my *senses* ? Take care not to awaken my *starved* hopes, unless you have solid food to give them when they *are* roused.”

“ Well, and so I have :—there is *my* ball !—you know it is only four days to my ball !”

“ My Lady Isleworth ! do you call this *solid* comfort ?”

“ Undoubtedly ! for, if you are not disposed to be pleased with the ball *itself*, yet the consequences !—the *consequences*, my dear, *must* delight you !”

“ As how !” said the Baronet, starting on his feet, and running to the window, to look after two handsome horses, led by two grooms round the square. “ Curse the scoundrels !—I will send them

them to the devil, for walking these creatures out of their stable before the sweat can have taken effect!" He rung the bell furiously—gave orders about his horses, as if his mind was engaged on *no* other subject—and then asking his lady, who had not ceased speaking, why she did not proceed?

"I have been talking without being heard. You was so engrossed, my dear, with your grooms and your horses, that you have *not* attended to what I was saying about my Lord Clarence and Clarissa.

"Do you really and truly believe it will ever be a match?" said Sir Frederick, eagerly; "Let *that* but happen! Clarence is an honest fellow, who will not see me turned out of my borough for want of money to support my interest! Yet—now I recollect—how came you so *certain* of the matter? Why, it appears to *me*, that Clarence cares for no woman in the world but Arthur's wife!

"It is *you*, Sir Frederick, who have been mistaken, and *I* am in the right!" She then poured into his greedy ears so pretty a *love-tale*, founded upon misconstruction, and garnished with fable, that she *completely* imposed on his shallow understanding,

understanding, established her *own* plans, restored him to good temper, and, when he met his family and friends at dinner, he was not the least jocular of the joyous party.

By some chance or other, Lord Clarence, that day, deserted the side of Lady Ann, and seated himself next to Miss Isleworth who also came in for a large portion of his civil speeches, so that every thing conspired to keep up Sir Frederick's newly acquired spirits; and now he wished for *Thursday* and the *ball* with as much avidity as Lady Isleworth herself. Lord Clarence, it was predetermined, would *then* throw off his mourning for *one* wife, and be the declared candidate for another;—in a few weeks after his daughter would become a woman of quality;—of course, that he should borrow from his lordship five thousand pounds, to ensure his borough:—views so captivating, whether considered in the light of ambition or convenience, completely swallowed all remembrances of past or present difficulties. Even Mrs. Snug was forgotten: so that the three succeeding days galloped along with festive velocity, to overtake those travelling before them with the same post-haste.

That *sweet* luxury of quiet, that harmony of *nothings*, which at times and seasons are the happiest moments of *rational* creatures, never pervaded

vaded the house in Portman-square: *there* all was hurry and riot: dissipation vanquished rest, and sleep could take no revenge on his foes, until they were ran down by fatigue; when, in the full face of day they would submit to *his* fetters, merely to renovate their *tired* nature for *new* midnight orgies.

Arthur, in his long absence, had written no more than one short letter to Lady Ann, in which he told her *all* his money was gone—*that* she must set about squeezing *new* supplies out of the *old* Peer—*that* the meeting would be over in two days—*that* he should then leave Newmarket on a shooting party—*that* he could not positively say when he should return home—but hoped she would mean time *divert* herself with *his* mother and *her* visitors; which charge she did not find it in her inclinations to treat with neglect.

The project of recovering her jewels, which engendered on the turnabout brain of Lady Isleworth, as she surveyed their representatives in her dressing-glass, was now settled into a regular system, of swindling what she still considered as *her* property out of the usurer's hands, by whom they were detained for value received. She knew him to be a man as steady to his hours of *doing* business, as *invariably* fixed in the habit of
always

always *doing* it to his *own* advantage. The transactions of the day constantly ended with him at nine in the evening: her ladyship therefore called at his door when sure that he would be at home and disengaged.

Mr. Bateman received her with an austerity of countenance, unlike the smiles of pleasure that used to *gladden* his canvas-coloured face on former *confidential* interviews.

He was smoking his little dry figure by the side of two sticks and a coal, the chimney being curiously constructed to prevent the waste of fuel—his shrivelled limbs were wrapped in a dirty flannel gown, and his shaking head enveloped with a red worsted night-cap.

Such was his situation—*such* his appearance, when Lady Isleworth, who would not have her arrival announced, followed a boy, as much in dishabille as his master, to the *sanctum sanctorum* of her *prudent* trustee.

The heedless unconcern of her first *entré* lost somewhat of its original ease, at finding herself very ceremoniously accosted with—

“ Well, Madam, are *you* come to tell *me* that I am as great a fool, in *your* opinion as I am thought

thought to be by *your* husband? Are you come to draw *my* teeth?—that is, Do you mean to persuade *me* out of the only security I have for the *vast* sums of money my *good nature* has supplied you with? I—ask *you* my Lady, if, *like* Sir Frederick, *you* expect I shall resign *my* trust to what yet remains *unconsumed* of my old friend your father's *hard* earned, *ill* spent riches? I tell you, my Lady, I will do no *such* thing! So I wish your Ladyship a very good night. I have got a cold, and am going to bed—so I say I wish you, my Lady, a *very* good night!”

Lady Isleworth had been silent to the end, that she might collect all her rhetoric into one point of eloquence, with which to combat his *unpromising* suspicions. She listened till he had done, without once interrupting his *angry* salutation, or his more angry adieus. But, seeing him about to shuffle out of the room, exerting herself to detain him, she explained the nature of Sir Frederick's visit so much to her own advantage, as to make her interest with the *cent per cent* miser stronger than ever.

It was now that confidence took place of distrust. Her eyes flashed *good* humour—her tongue was oiled with complacency—till she
had

had actually talked him so much out of his senses, that, before they parted, she prevailed over his caution to trust her with her own jewels, to decorate, as she said, the person of Miss Isleworth, for *one* night only—the night of nights! —the night of her *grand gala*! but under promise to have them delivered up the *very* next morning, which he calculated would be about eight and forty hours that these dear deposits would be out of his *own* possession; for which indulgence he accepted the *small* premium of fifty pounds, another debt to be added to her already prolific list of obligations.

Never did *woman* make a better bargain, or *man* a worse: yet both had their ends, and both were equally satisfied.—The *taker-in* departed under the happiest of certainties, carrying with her the valuable cargo of her earthly treasures;—the *taker-in* remained behind, to grin at his *imaginary* good luck, and to hug himself on the *probability* that this might not be the *last* occasion she would have for the use of her jewels.

Besides the natural suggestions of an extortioner, he entertained others of a *domestic* nature—one advantageous to the *increase*; and one to the *security* of his wealth.

The

The jewels had been borrowed for the express purpose of giving splendor to Miss Isleworth's appearance, and promoting her marriage with Lord Clarence; and Bateman desired any body's alliance with that *ruined* family, rather than it should be united to his *own*; and, for reasons *then* only known to himself, but which we are *now* going to lay before our readers, he *heartily* wished success to her ladyship's undertaking; he would have done more—he would have *given* it all the support in his power, *money* excepted.

CHAP. XXIV.

A SHORT HISTORY.

IN the middle stage of his life, and in the full tide of prosperous fortune, Mr. Bateman intermarried with the younger branch of a noble house, which, tottering on its worm-eaten foundation, was glad to find a prop in so wealthy a connection.

Besides

“My son,” said he, “let the world say what they please of *my* parsimony, respect you their opinions! If I am a miser, *they* may despise me, because they get nothing by *my* frugality: for the same reason *you* should honour me, because *all* I gain by *my* savings will be your’s in good time. I am not like *most* fathers, who plead poverty, to make their sons as great economists as *themselves*. I have spared nothing on your *education*—I shall spare nothing on your *pleasures*. You are a *gentleman*—I would have you live and spend *like* a gentleman! There is but *one* folly that I *never* will pardon: Marry to satisfy my views, and, if I die to-morrow, you are master of *half* a million!—Marry to displease me, and you are a *beggar*! Once for all I tell you my mind, to avoid being pestered with *love-tales* in favour of any needy *Miss* who may catch you in her *toils*, and persuade you that *love* bare-footed, is better than *love* in a coach and fix!”

With this solemn charge sounding in his ears, Percival Bateman left the presence of his father, to call on Lord Dunston, his mother’s uncle, it being before agreed upon that they should go that night to the opera, where the tempter to evil threw a stumbling block in the way of poor Percival, which, if it did not absolutely break
the

Besides being a woman of fashion, Mrs. Bateman was endowed with so much beauty, together with so many amiable qualities, that, as long as she lived, she not only maintained her empire over the heart of her husband, but, by watching the growth of avarice, and endeavouring to root it from his mind, his character acquired a sort of *temporary* respectability, which lasted no longer than herself: at her death, the ill seeds of a narrow disposition sprung up in their *native* soil, and over ran every liberal idea which she, with persevering diligence, delighted to cultivate.

One son was the *only* solace of his widowhood, and to enrich him, by every possible means, his *only* pursuit. He followed the golden phantom of gain, not through the paths by which probity would have brought him, though more slowly, to the haven of his purpose, but obtained it by a nearer cut—by striking into a road where honesty never travelled, and by galloping over the *necessities* of the *neccessitous*, or turning them to his *own* account, he helped himself along in so speedy a manner, that he greeted his son with this remarkable speech, on the day which completed the eighteenth year of his age.

“ My

the neck of all filial obedience, very much dislocated his will to perform that part of which depended more on his heart than his duty.

Fathers and Cupid are ever at variance. Old Bateman's sovereign contempt of his godship's management, in sometimes coupling a youth, *famous* for his riches, with a maiden *famous* for her lack of them, the mortified deity, conscious that he *seldom* plays these mischievous pranks, and *never* but in sport, indignantly resolved to revenge on the son the sins of his father, and that very night threw all his spirited essence into the lovely blue eyes of the young Clarissa: his arrows he dipped in lucid poison, and hurled them at the devoted Perceval, who, it may be remembered, cried out, on her first coming into the box, "What a phenomenon! Modesty unites with vivacity, and sensibility has joined itself with infantine graces, to form that adorable creature!"

The image of her charms, at this early period, so fondly impressed his imagination, as to make her the subject of his praise on all occasions—even in the presence of his father; who, taking the alarm which the warmth of his expressions justified, demanded to know the situation of his heart; and with so much cunning address

address he managed the inquiries, as cheated his son into the fullest confession of his very natural sentiments for the young lady, and drew from the old gentleman an *irrevocable* denunciation of wrath, should he ever think of a serious connection with *any* daughter of Lady Illeworth's. But, notwithstanding all the precaution he could suggest, and that his son was far enough removed out of the way of temptation when her ladyship made her last visit, yet he could not help rejoicing that there appeared a certainty of Clarissa's being disposed of before his son's return to Europe, thereby cutting off all possible contingencies hereafter.

Should my readers be dissatisfied with this *narrow* sketch of a *narrow* mind, I hope to bring them into good humour with me again, by running after Lady Illeworth, and disclosing more of the family *secrets*, it being an established *fact*, that *one* neighbour dearly loves to know how *another* neighbour thrives.

When people carve thrivingly for themselves, they scorn to be the slaves of opinion, or stop in the progress of their pursuits, any more than did the wife of Sir Frederick, who, by vouching and varnishing, against all good faith and honor, having *imposed* on the *Imposer-general* to

VOL. I. H trust

trust the jewels in her hands, carried them no further than to a friend of her own, who she *knew* to have lately had a good run at play, was flush of money, and would accommodate her wants on *immoderate* terms of interest, supposing the security to be answerable fourfold for the sum demanded.

Seven thousand pound had been the *original* purchase of the costly gems, on which she could obtain no more than six hundred, besides liquidating a debt of honor: the amount of which altogether, left what may be called the *soul's* essence of old Bateman in pledge for a round thousand.

She longed to buy a thousand things on her way home, particularly the pawn-broker's watch, which had before so much struck her fancy as a proper present to Lady Ann; but it being late before the negotiation terminated, she was forced to suspend her intentions till the next day.—The shops were all shut—a disappointment from which there could be no appeal. In her short drive she made out a list of articles to be bought on the following morning, *equally* useful with the watch of her idolatry: the only omitted memorandums were—the *demands* of the curate's wife, and those of her two exiled daughters.

Briskly

Briskly entering her house between eleven and twelve, she gaily tripped to the drawing room, and had the exquisite felicity of finding her faro-table already arranged, crouded round by an host of precious friends, who devoted some part of every night to the amusement, as they said, of *Lady Ann*; it being agreed, by general consent, that she *must* confine herself to *domestic* enjoyments, till she could enter into the world by the beaten path of *presentation*.

Lady Isleworth drew out her purse, threw her gold on the table, and began cocking her card, with an avidity which prevented her from observing, that neither Lady Ann, Clarissa, or Lord Clarence, made up the assembly. Some *odd* questions, asked in an *odd* manner, by a round shouldered witchified old woman of quality, who never opened her lips, except to make a passage for the bilious conceptions of her acid disposition, might have roused her attention, could any thing have withdrawn it from her stake and her card.—“Pray, Madam,” she spitefully asked, “have you brought Mr. Isleworth to his senses? Is poor Lady Ann recovered? And what, I beg to know, is become of *Sir Frederick* and my *Lord Clarence*?”

"Oh, that *dear* nine of diamonds!" exclaimed her ladyship, "it is always my friend; I should have been ruined long ago, but for that *divine* card!" She swept a considerable sum into her pool: then, turning to her *inquisitive* neighbour, answered her enquiries as deaf people pretending to hear would have answered them.

"Really I do not know *when* to expect Mr. Isleworth—Lady Ann is mightily satisfied—Yes, yes, Madam, to a certainty Lord Clarence will come back to us again."

Arthur entered, with Lady Ann leaning on his arm, just as his mother pronounced the last word. "Well," said he, drawing near the table, with a half satisfied half doubtful air, "I am come to make my peace with you *all*: I was in a cursed passion, and beg pardon that the *effects* of it should disturb *you*—not that I think myself much to blame neither."

Here he was interrupted by her ladyship's asking, in a tone of surprise, how long he had been returned, and what he had done to offend her company?

"What

“What any other husband would have done,” he replied, “who had caught so handsome a fellow as a Clarence at the feet of his wife!”

“Impossible!” cried Lady Isleworth, “you must have been mistaken.”

“No, no; I shall acquit the blunderer *myself*,” retorted his unabashed rib, “as far as *appearances* can acquit him. It is *quite* certain, that when he abruptly broke in upon *us*, I had retired to the next room with *Clarence*: he did also find *that* woe-begone widower *sprawling* at my feet; but his sighs (ill-bred wretch as he was) were tributary to Arthur’s *sister*, and not to Arthur’s *wife*; he only wanted *me* to be his advocate with Clarissa. I was extremely angry with your son for making such a *noise* about the matter: but, having since explained it to the satisfaction of *all* parties, his lordship is just now in the act of being presented with all due forms by Sir Frederick as an *accepted* lover; so no doubt they will be *as* happy as lovers generally are on *such* sort of solemnities.

This public declaration of Lord Clarence’s intention was received by Lady Isleworth with joyful exclamations, bordering on the language of folly. From the rest of the party it met
-with

with that sort of tissue reception which is composed of *incredulous* smiles, *ill-dissembled* envy, and worse acted participation of a conceited mother's exultations, who, quite intoxicated, caught at the sounds of congratulation, without perceiving that they issued from the source of insincerity, and that not one, at *least* of her *female* guests, but would rather had heard Lady Ann was detected in that amour they were all very sure she was carrying on with Lord Clarence, *than* that *he* should screen *her* reputation, by raising Miss Isleworth to the rank of his countess.

The chagrin of *some*, on this *doubly* mortifying occasion, was only expressed, though in strong enough characters, by a scowl which the finger of discontent had written on their features, whilst others confined *their* feelings to a *sneer*, a *shrug*, or a *whisper*, so as to be clearly understood, except by the old woman who first addressed Lady Isleworth with questions about her family, and she bluntly declared it to be the *most* extraordinary well managed affair that had *ever* happened within her observation.

CHAP. XXV.

THE MIDNIGHT CONFERENCE.

LORD CLARENCE made his appearance no more that night in the drawing-room of his *mama elect*; but, after the *lover-like* interview was over, and which, in his *then* state of perplexity, was shortened to the mere limits of *decency*, he adjourned to his own house, there to consider what dangers are attendant on propensities to *illicit* gallantries, and to cast up the sum total of all the penalties he was likely to pay for having *too* much indulged them.

One friend, the confidant of his lordship's *penchant* for Miss Isleworth from its *earliest* period, and who *alone* was privy to his change of sentiments in favour of Lady Ann, now occurred to his recollection as the *only* person to whom he could apply for consolation or advice. To this friend he dispatched a short note, containing only the following words.

“ Dear

“ Dear Col. dead or live let me see you, the
“ instant you get my summons! Fishing in
“ troubled waters, I am fouled over head and
“ ears. Marriage is the word! Come and
“ drag me out, or I shall be suffocated!”

The servant who carried this curious billet, was ordered to find Sir James Collington, wherever he might be; and so adroitly he executed his commission, that after searching two hours, in houses of all descriptions, for this every where *well-known* man of pleasure, about half an hour after midnight he came up with him at a noted receptacle for idle young men, who have nothing in pursuit but their *own* destruction.

Sir James opened the mandate which commanded him to break from the joyous circle, who were that night to have supped at *his* expence, and without staying to digest the contents, he bid the waiter get him a hackney coach—recommended the company to make themselves merry in his absence—swore that he was going to meet a woman of quality at her own apartment, whose partiality for him could be only equalled by the adoration paid to her celestial charms from *all* the rest of mankind—could not say when he would be able to return—hoped it would not be later than two—but, should he be
detained

detained beyond that time, insisted on their sitting down to table, and depend on his joining them at his first leisure.

A coach stopped at the door—he leaped into it without further ceremony—and soon found himself, not in the presence of his beautiful incognito, but in the apartment of Lord Clarence, who, tired with pacing up and down, impatient at the delay of his messenger, and not knowing what to do with his own reflections, had just begun a second note to Sir James, who, he concluded, must have gone into the country, whether he intended to send it by express. At this critical moment Sir James stood before him, and his spirits revived at sight of so *well-tried* a champion, in whom he confided to extricate him out of the horrible involvement into which he had precipitately tumbled.

No lawyer, composing for the inspection of his counsel, could be more tediously prolix in preparing his brief, than was the Earl of Clarence in showing his complaint to the ear of friendship. We shall not follow him in all his *repetitions*, but just borrow so much from the matter and manner as will lead us, by the light of his own language, and through a shorter path, to the very marrow of his grievances.

He began with bitterly inveighing against his evil destiny; *first*, that it had made him sensible to the charms of Miss Isleworth, at a time when his passions were *more* deeply taken in by the *seeming* insurmountable bar which opposed their gratification; and *next*, that it had decoyed him into retirement, where he could find no other employment than to nurse his cursed romantic ideas, and fit him for the part of *fool* and *knave*, which he had since acted, so much to his *own* confusion. "I never till now," said the desponding Peer, "considered the *death* of my wife as a *misfortune*; but henceforward *that* event will put on *another* complexion. She was passive, obedient, unresisting—I could *lead* or *drive* her as it suited my purpose or my inclinations."

A loud laugh from Sir James interrupted the passionate eulogium he pronounced on the merits of his defunct lady. "I thought," said his friend, "you had sent for me to help you *out* with the *living*, and not to hear your lamentation over the *dead*! What is it you mean, my Lord? Explain how it happens that the Isleworths have drawn you into *their* net; for, by the contents of your note, I can understand nothing plainer than that you have promised to marry their daughter;—last night you swore to renounce the idea of this connection."

"And

“Aud renounce it I *will!*” interrupted his lordship, “if there yet remains a probability of escaping their *darned* machinations. The devil take Arthur, and the whole race of blockheads from which he is descended!”

“Have a care,” cried Sir James, “in bidding the devil take the husband, that you disengage his *wife* from the contract; for, if I spell right, you will not be so ready to resign *her* as you are to give away *poor* Arthur—and you know they are *one* flesh to all intents and purposes!”

“That is as it may be,” replied Lord Clarence; “I am not the first man, if I should be so inclined, who, in *such* cases, have split the *matter*, without confounding the *substance*. But all this hap-hazard conversation is nothing to the point. I am involved: and, when I have told you how deeply, either shew me a way to get out, or shoot me through the head. In two words, I will *not* live for *Clarissa*, but am ready to *die* for Lady *Ann!*”

“Enough!” said his friend; “say on, and we will see what can be done to serve and save you.”

His

His lordship, thus encouraged, began as follows. "I do not know how it is, but I have taken up an *aversion* to Miss Isleworth, infinitely stronger than my *former* partiality for the same object, and this dislike has increased on every interview with her *fascinating* sister-in-law ! It happened this evening, that by some confounded chance or other, I followed Arthur's wife, as she retreated from the company, to an adjacent apartment. We were alone: she divinely kind—and I, the most enamoured of men, had fallen at her feet in an ecstasy of gratitude, when the door burst open, and in rushed her savage husband ! I felt abashed, but tried to look sturdy ;—Lady Ann flew to meet him, without betraying surprise or consciousness ; and, for the first time, I found my *prowess* stimulated by the superior courage of a *woman* ! The interloper, with a ghastly grin of a defiance, pushed the elegant creature from his arms, and, without uttering a word, ran furiously back to those *female* devils, who, I'll be sworn, had filled his empty head with surmises on our quitting their humdrum party to enjoy a comfortable *tête-à-tête*. What he said to those incarnates on finding us together, I do not know ; but we heard his distant voice, like a whirlwind, that swept all other sounds before it. To make short of the story—Just as my divine mistress had thought me the only lesson which
could

could be translated to her advantage, Arthur, reinforced by the presence of his father, obtruded himself a *second* time; and both were advancing towards me with the hasty steps of menacing heroes, when, without permitting them leisure to accuse me, accordingly to Lady Ann's hastily preconcerted plan, I *boldly* demand Sir Frederick's consent to address his daughter, pretending that I owed her ladyship's condescension, in allowing me a private audience, to her desire of promoting my happiness, which wholly depended on Miss Isleworth's good opinion, and to my earnest solicitation, that she would grant me her attention for a few moments, to declare *my* sentiments, as well as to implore *her* interest. The best player on the stage cannot perform to his own advantage, except he is well seconded. I was wonderfully supported by the abilities of my *heroine*; and our *joint* endeavours produced such an effect on the credulity of our auditors, that before a quarrel *began* peace was established. Arthur, if he had any remaining doubts, prudently put them in his pocket; he embraced his wife, and shook me heartily by the hand; whilst the Baronet, as if by inspiration he had suspected the sacrifice I made was not a voluntary one, dragged me from the grasp of his son, and, with a thousand *fine* speeches of the *honour* done to himself, *his* family, and I know not what—of
my

my *great* goodness—hurried me through the apartment occupied by the *faro-players*, to Clarissa's dressing-room—sent for her to attend him there—and, having presented me as her *future* husband, left us together. We were both silly enough on the occasion: *I* made love without passion, and *she* received it without attention. The scene was *short*, yet sufficiently *tedious*; and I broke from it to consult *you*, on measures to dissolve an engagement which, at all hazards, I am *determined* never to ratify."

"And what will you give an honest fellow to take her off your hands?" said Collington."

"The thing is impossible!" replied his lordship, "she is the vainest prude in nature!—Cold, insensible, unfeeling, the extreme reverse of Lady *Ann*, or I might still have loved her as I once *did*, almost to madness; for, in the article of *beauty*, I confess she exceeds all the women in the world, but *insensibility*!—curled insensibility!"——

"In spite of all you can say to deter me from making the experiment," returned Sir James, "I am willing to risk any sum you please on my personal success with this cold-hearted fair one. What say you to a bet of five hundred that I will
not

not rid you of the incumbrance, without your having any further trouble in the affair?"

"Done!" cried his lordship, "provided a single clause be admitted, that, though you accomplish what you propose, if *my* access to the *idiot* family is *cut off* by *your* manœuvring, you pay the forfeit of a bungler."

This last proposition being agreed to, and the spirits of Lord Clarence much recruited, he was easily prevailed on to accompany his friend back to the tavern, where we drop them for the present, to waste those hours in play or intoxication which, I hope, my wiser male readers are dedicating to the more natural purposes of repose from the labours of dissipation. Pleasant dreams and soft slumbers wait upon them!

CHAP. XXVI.

AN EXECUTION.—NOT AT NEWGATE!

FASHIONABLE involvements admit *few* representations of *Real* life. The author, the reader,

der, and the actor, are here all upon a *par*, forced to bustle along through the crowd of *changes* and *chances*, which every body must *know*, by experience or hear say, to be extremely troublesome, though extremely natural.

Error has its origin—evil its consequences. Folly is the *parent* of luxury; and the evil of being in debt twice as much as a man can pay, is followed up by consequences which *might* be called disgraceful, did not indulgent custom bronze over the features of *shame*, and call them by the softer appellation of *difficulties*.

For several days preceding her grand gala, Lady Isleworth had kept the wheels of her carriage in constant motion, driving from door to door amongst her numerous acquaintance, to reinforce the splendor of her appearance by all the finery she could collect for the occasion, and seldom returned without a lading of valuable plate or china, to eke out her own rather scanty provision in these articles. This plan of making our neighbours *convenient* is by no means derogative to the *highest* conditions, or our lady of *ton* would not have adopted it. We term this borrowing system a local taxation; by means of which, on the morn of exhibition, if Sir Frederick could not be called a *rich* man, it might

might have been said *his* house was abundantly stored with the *riches* of *other* people.

Lady Ann's no less political than public declaration of Lord Clarence having made proposals for an union with Miss Isleworth, was better received than digested by the *faro* party: their felicitations were not spared, neither were their opinions *shaken*. Indeed, what is there in nature so difficult to eradicate, as certain *unfavourable* impressions, when stamped on hearts which are moulded by malice for its own everlasting habitation? Of course every tongue, authorised to spread abroad the good fortune of Miss Isleworth, thought itself equally intitled to *admire* her ladyship's address, who could *so* adroitly take care of her *own* fame, and so handsomely *cater* for the interest of her husband's family.

Two such reports, walking about town hand in hand, were, as soon as they could be set on foot, readily admitted into every circle of notoriety. But, had the marriage come *alone*, I cannot ascertain the degree of pleasure it might have carried with it, or the credit it might have obtained—I can only announce, that the exaltation of *one* woman being coupled with the defamation of *another*, gave to the whole an exquisite relish, highly gratifying to such palates as
love

love to gorge on tainted reputations ; and so greedy is this sort of cannibal appetite, that before the ladies in Portman-square were ready for visitors, every avenue was crowded with carriages, driving at full speed, as if the fair mistress of each vied with the other which should be *first* to carry their compliments of congratulation to *Miss Isleworth*, and to take the *exact* measure of *Lady Ann's* countenance.

“ Not at home ! ”

“ Mortifying answer ! — How queer ! — Deny themselves after so *decided* a declaration ! ” These exclamations, though uttered by the lady whose coachman, having the whip hand of many other competitors, had brought her first to the door, were so much to the same purpose with those who followed and received the same reply, that, without having recourse to repetition, I shall suffer them to turn from the door, and follow the porter into the house, there to describe a scene of confusion, much more unpleasant than *uncommon*.

The old man who had taken cards from the different footmen carried them no farther than his own hall, where, laying them carelessly on the window-bench, he asked his fellow servants,

as they fauntered about with all the ease of unconcerned spectators, if they were not ashamed of themselves, to see their master and lady in *trouble*, yet look as if they did not *care* how they got out of it? "For my part," added he, "though I have not lived with them passing a twelve-month, yet my heart is ready to break, when I see all these here fine goods taken to——. Every thing must be sold, I suppose; for I have heard say, though you cannot *catch* a parliament man, you may lay hold of whatever *belongs* to him."

Sir Frederick's valet bid him be comforted. "My friend," said he, "your lamentations are all *prejudice* of education. Had you lived in as many *great* families as *I* have had the *honour* to serve, you would regard a trifle of this sort no more than *I* do. Lord help you, poor man! I dare say you expect *we* are to cry an auction—pay *our* debts—discharge *our* servants—lock up *our* doors—and run naked into the country! No such thing, honest David!—no such thing! Such may be your *old-fashioned* way of proceeding; but *now* times are altered—very much altered, Mr. David! *we* rather consider it a mark of distinction, something that sets *us* above the vulgar, to have it said *we* have more executions in our house than the Duke of ——, the Earl of ——, or my Lord ——. I say David, the deeper we are in the higher we go!"

David

David shook his head, and the orator was put to silence by the ringing of his master's bell—a summons which he flew to obey with such unusual alacrity, as almost to convince David himself there must be something *very* honourable in an execution.

When we come to take a view of the internal apartments, that inimitable scene, so beautifully described in *Venice Preserved*, does not *exactly* stand represented in *all* its parts: yet we shall find enough of similarity between the circumstances of Jaffier and Sir Frederick, to make us subscribe our faith to the *general* opinion, that those poets surpass all other poets, who never turn aside from the straight path of nature, to enrich their selection of sweets by the flowers of improbability.

Here stood the surly bull dogs of the law, lording it over the massy piles of plate; *not* of Sir Frederick's plate *only*, because *many* were the families who helped to raise it. But *no* distinction of property could be allowed; justice had seized on *all*. Shall we look farther for the gentle Belvidera, to give our picture the finishing likeness? The search would be in vain: it cannot be found in the streaming eyes, folded hands, passionate acclamations, or bewildered looks of Lady Isleworth.

On

On the contrary, no body appeared *more* fortified against distress, or *more* busy in averting its consequences, than her ladyship. The mountain of silver, on which the officers of restraint had laid their rapacious gripe, in *her* pleasant ideas, seemed only of value as necessary to the splendor of her evening entertainment. After much entreaty, and more *solid* argument silently administered, this point being settled to her satisfaction, she not only remained quiet herself, but permitted the guardians of her own and neighbours effects *quietly* to make out their inventory, and refresh themselves with the very best her house afforded.

This unfortunate accident happened at the instigation of a certain coach-maker, who was honoured with supplying carriages for the family use upwards of fourteen years, and, in the present state of business, his bill amounted to seven thousand five hundred pounds! "But what is that," cried the composed matron of the mansion, "to *our* prospects? Is not our daughter soon to be a countess? Has not our son married into a noble family? Are not our other girls all handsome?—May they not expect to do as well as their sister? Come, come, Sir Frederick, I see this foolish affair of the *execution* frets you! It is mighty ridiculous that it should

should give any *sort* of vexation, when I so clearly prove every thing to be going on in the best possible train of aggrandizement for ourselves and our children. I wish," continued she, "you would leave off that ugly custom, my dear, of trotting up and down the room, biting your nails, and counting your fingers, when one is speaking to you on matters of consequence, it has such an appearance of inattention.

"Seven thousand five hundred pounds!" repeated Sir Frederick, for the fiftieth time of repetition.—"If you expect, Madam, that I should listen to any thing you can propose, first tell me how this debt is to be discharged, and let it be your *next* consideration how we are to support the *future*."

"There is no earthly occasion for *thinking* how the debt is to be paid till to-morrow! The people who have taken possession will be no hindrance to our appearance *this* evening. I have settled it with them already: three of the best looking are engaged to carry round refreshments; and, as we are obliged to hire such sort of attendants, it will rather be a convenience, than otherwise, that these men should officiate."

"Their

"Their services will not be wanted: you must, Lady Isleworth, put off your company, or get rid of this cursed execution before it has taken air. To be exposed is to lose Lord Clarence; for, though he may be disposed to marry *our* daughter, he might not be disposed to connect himself with *our* poverty."

"You are so far right," replied her ladyship, somewhat piqued at the insinuation; I agree, it would be best he should know nothing of the matter, or indeed any other body. We want no intermeddlers in our affairs: and how in the world *should* it take air, except by your ill-digested plan of putting off the company, which I positively never will consent to!"

Something more than a desultory conversation now took place between this fashionable pair: Sir Frederick was loud, and my lady no less violent. It *shall*, and it shall not be a ball, was the shuttlecock argument, which neither of them would let fall from the ground; till, both tired of the game, each proposed a different expedient to terminate the battle, without either being the loser."

It

It was first proposed by Lady Illeworth, that, to make an *honourable* peace, and decide all differences, Arthur should be called upon to join his father in cutting off the entail, which she could not consider but as mere lumber to *him*, as well as to themselves; by which means a large sum would be speedily obtained; and, when divided, would serve their own *present* exigencies, and enable Arthur, with the other moiety, to take an elegant house, and to fix Lady Ann's *establishment* proportionate to her *quality*, "In the mean time," continued she, "as you are, my dear, *so* positive about getting these people out of the house, I shall have no objection to try my interest with old Bateman; and, perhaps, when he hears that Arthur is reasonable, he may be wrought upon to accommodate us with the paltry sum about which we have been debating."

"No," replied Sir Frederick, "neither of these applications are promising. Bateman is an incorrigible blockhead, and Arthur *never* will comply! I have made him the most liberal offers, and he has refused them all."

"Well,

"Well, *that* is strange! I never heard any thing *so* strange! There is no accounting for the boy's folly, except he has already sold his reversionary right to the Jews:—it is the only pardonable cause he can possibly assign for his want of obedience."

"It does not signify to us what are his reasons," said Sir Frederick, peevishly; "but I tell you I have asked him, and he will not do it."

"Monstrous!" exclaimed the lady:—"So I am not to receive *my* company, because *he* chooses to be refractory, and *you* cruelly join with him to disappoint me, merely for the sake of contradiction! Pray, Sir, what is there so *unfashionable* in an execution that *you* should desire to conceal it at the expence of common good manners? Are not *all* the first families in town invited? Have I not been at a world of trouble in collecting them? And do you wish I should put them off, only because there are *bailiffs* in the house? A mighty pretty excuse, truly! A charming subject, indeed, for a flyabout card to disinvite people! Sir Frederick, no; I cannot submit to degrade my *independent* consequence, however *you* may be humbled in *your* sentiments by the impertinence of a pitiful mechanic."

"If you dispossess me entirely of dignity," said Sir Frederick, smiling at her impetuosity, "I hope, my dear, you will allow my *patience* has not suffered diminution. And, now that I suppose you to have said all that can be said on your side of the argument, let it be my turn to speak, and, if possible, restore myself to your favourable opinion."

"Nothing is so easy," she replied; only say you will not insist that the ball shall be put off, and we are the best friends in the world."

"Nothing is farther from my intention, Lady Isleworth, than to make you uneasy. Even in your fit of anger, which would not suffer you to spare *me*, I was all the time devising means to gratify *your* inclinations, without doing violence to my own unalterable determination to have no mixture in our evening's entertainment; it must be a ball and *no* bailiffs, or bailiffs and no ball."

"Oh, how you love to torment me, when my heart is already bursting with suspense! Pity my agony, and say that it shall be the former. Dear Sir Frederick, have you really
thought

thought on any *sort* of plan by which this *odious* debt can be discharged?"

"Why, yes; and it is built on the foundation of certain expressions which just now fortunately happened to fall from your own lips, when you talked of your *independent* consequence: the lucky phrase brought to my memory, that if you was inclined to barter that independence for present accommodation the thing might be done."

"What! immediately?"

"This day—this very hour, I will bring you a purchaser, who is ready to pay down seven thousand pounds, provided we jointly make over to him our life interest in your separate property, to which agreement your trustees assent is unnecessary."

"Well, and why don't you send for this angel of a man, without losing a moment's time?" cried Lady Isleworth, with as much eagerness as if this angel of a man was to have made them a free gift of the seven thousand pounds, instead of taking from them fifteen hundred a year.

"Since you consent, I shall dispatch a note to bring him instantly," said Sir Frederick; "but have you considered well, and are you sure you have your own approbation for the step to which I am leading you?"

"Approbation!" repeated her ladyship, "how can you ask the question? It has my *whole* stock of approbation, or I should be quite as great an idiot as Arthur."

Pleased that his bird had flown to the net, Sir Frederick dispatched such a billet to Isaac Isaac as his Lady highly extolled, protesting she was *now* sure all impediments would be removed, and they should go on as well as ever. Ah! reader, can you form *any* idea how well that *must* be?

CHAP. XXVII.

A LITTLE OF EVERY BODY.

MISS ISLEWORTH, being slightly indisposed with a cold, and having gone to rest at a very late hour, was still sleeping; though her maid, eager to spread the news of what visitors were arrived, had often been peeping through her curtains, hoping she should be the first to rehearse the confusion below stairs; but Clarissa was dreaming of her lover, and all her Abigail's little devotion to break the charm were ineffectual.

Arthur Isleworth had not been home the preceding night. He was, when a single man, particularly partial to the *comforts* of a tavern, and, since his marriage, he had abated nothing of *that* habitual partiality.

Lady Ann Isleworth, far from indulging any thing like discontent at her husband's nocturnal flights, only *regretted* that decorum restrained

her

her from indulging in the same frolicksome amusements. But, not to come much behind hand in pursuit of pleasures authorised by custom, and as morning carries no suspicion on its open countenance, she had therefore, at an early hour, appointed to meet Lord Clarence in the Green Park, and was gone out to fulfil her engagement just ten minutes before the *law terriers* seized on all the pretty things belonging to her mother-in-law, and from which her presence could in no way have redeemed them.

There are three distinct classes of people to whom suspense is the most intolerable of all evils—the lover, who doubts the constancy of his mistress—the heir, who doubts of his inheritance—but, more than either, the ruined man of pleasure, who doubly doubts whether his Jewish connection *will* or *can* save him from *immediate* sinking into the bottomless pit of destruction! Of this last number was poor Sir Frederick, when two hours had elapsed, and no Isaac Isaac made his appearance.

Lady Isleworth, who never would let go the airy *hopes* which, with *her*, answered the same end as *realities*, instead of entering into the troubles of her pale fretful helpmate, busied herself in sidgiting from room to room,
charging

charging the possessors of her captivated treasures to be careful none of them were injured by keeping them one upon another, and in giving orders to the officious domestics *what* was to be *done*, preparative to the evening gala.

Clarissa's maid, seeing no chance that her mistress would suddenly awaken, just stepped down into the hall to glean a little *more* intelligence, that when she returned to tell her tale of horror, it might want no embellishment truth should be able to furnish or fancy invent.

She was beginning to enter on a most interesting *tête-à-tête* with the valet, concerning their own situations in the family, whether it would be most for their benefit to take themselves off, with the certain loss of three years' wages, or stay at the *risk* of losing as many more? when, before the question could be determined, Miss Isleworth's and Sir Frederick's bell both ringing at the same instant, summoned them different ways, and broke up the conference.

"Good God!" cried Clarissa, wringing her hands, and lifting her tearful eyes to heaven, on hearing what had happened below, "then we are all undone!"

"Not so bad as that, *I hope*, Me'am," said the tender hearted girl, who dearly loved her young lady, "for when I was running up to answer your bell, I heard her ladyship tell the confectioner, that if he gave ten guineas a pottle for strawberries, he must get them by the evening."

"Ah, my poor mother? what will become of you!" exclaimed Clarissa: "Dear, good Ursula, give me a glass of water!"

The water was presented; but her hand trembled so violently she could not carry it to her lips. Ursula, as she held it to her mouth, begged she would be more composed, giving it as her opinion, that the matter would soon be settled—a little bird having whispered in her ear, that a friend was coming to discharge the debt, and turn all bailiffs out of doors.

"And who is this kind friend?" asked the weeping Clarissa, redoubling her tears; "Who can it be: Is there a reasonable man upon the face of the earth"—she was going to say, who would involve himself to save us? But, reflecting that such a question could not be proposed, without obliquely glancing on her parents' want of discretion, the words were suppressed, and she
only

only added, "Oh, Ursula, tell me what friend is coming to our succour!"

"Why, Madam, John told me, as he ran out at the hall door with a letter in his hand, that he was going to carry it to Mr. Isaac Isaac, the rich Jew money-lender, who used to do business for his master, he said, and would soon be here with his bags full of gold, to pay down every farthing your papa owes in the world."

Miss Isleworth, who, from observation and other circumstances, was enough initiated in the mystery of domestic involvements, remembering also to have heard Mr. Curry say, that a ruined man had better deal with the devil than the Jews, immediately formed the wise resolution of applying both for counsel and aid, in her father's distress, to that best of men and kindest of friends.

She durst not divulge her intentions, knowing they would be strongly opposed by her mother, and perhaps entirely defeated: "Step down," said she to her attendant, "tell the chairman I am going out; bid them get ready, and I will be down in a moment.—I shall take no footman!"

"Nor chair either, I am afraid, Madam," replied the sympathetic Ursula, shaking her head,

"the bailiffs will not let a scrap of our goods be carried out of the house—master's valet told me so."

Clarissa's agonies multiplied. "Well," cried she, sobbing as if her heart would break, throwing a cloak round her shoulders, and drawing a bonnet over her face, "they will let *me* pass, I suppose! The monsters will not dare to detain *me*! Do you think they will, Ursula?"

"No indeed, my dear young lady: should they lay hands on you, there is neither man nor maid in the house but would have a pull at them, though they were sure to be hung up the next day as high as St. Paul's!"

Miss Isleworth moved towards the door.

"Stop a moment, Madam," cried Ursula, "just let me run down and try if I cannot prevail on them to let you have my lady's chair, for it is a thousand pities you should go out after this manner."

Clarissa seemed to be of the same opinion. She had no notion there could be any other way of going into the city but in her father's carriage or her mother's chair; and she only made choice
of

of the latter because it was a much more private conveyance than the former.

Pity-moving, unfortunate children of vain, giddy, dissipated mothers! if ye do not learn from your own application what *they* are incapable of teaching, in the hour of humiliation you will, no more than Clarissa, be able to do without the luxuries which poverty may, one time or other, *force* you to relinquish. I therefore most affectionately advise, that you practise yourselves in the use of your limbs as well as your reason; that when your *state* must be resigned to *necessity*, you may render the yoke more easy by putting it on with firmness.

CHAP. XXVIII.

ODD MAN.

URSULA staid on her errand so long that her mistress became not only, impatient but apprehensive, and cried out the moment she saw her, "Ah! you have told my mother, and she has been chiding you!—Why, your face burns like fire!"

"No, Ma'am, it is not for *that*: I have not seen her ladyship since I saw you; and yet, to be sure, I am prodigiously flurried!"

"What

“What then has happened? Can I have the chair?”

“Oh! yes; no body said *no* to *that*; you may have the *chair*, Ma’am, but *not* the men to carry you?”

“How so?”

“I suppose I must tell you all?”

“Certainly!—But make haste, if you please, dear Ursula!”

“Why then, Ma’am, after the bailiffs had very civilly consented that you should use the chair, I went to look for the chairman; for you know, Ma’am, my lady has had but *one* for many months. I told him to get ready, for that you were going out. “And who is to carry her?” cried the churl; *you* to be sure, said I. “And where is my partner?”—Why, you must go out and call *odd man*! as you always do when you carry her ladyship. “D—n you if I do;” swearing a great oath, and roaring so loud that the officers, as they call themselves, heard him quite plain, and fell a laughing, till they had worked me into a passion, and I again insisted John *should* go and call *odd man*! He swore worse than before, that he never would call *odd man* in Sir Frederick’s family again as long as he lived, till he

he was paid the thirty guineas which it had cost him out of his own pocket for *odd men*, from the time when his natural partner got a place in the stamp-office."

"Gracious heaven!" cried Clarissa; and, rushing out of the room, holding a handkerchief to her eyes, passed through the porter's hall into the street, where, recollecting that a hackney coach might answer the same purpose as either her father's carriage or her mother's chair, she stepped into one, and ordered herself to be driven to Broad-street.

Cloudy was the weather, but more cloudy the aspect of Sir Frederick; he raved—he stormed—he kicked every thing which came in his way, *except* his lady, who, having in her *own* power the only means by which he could possibly be extricated from his troubles, *her* he only inwardly cursed for her total indifference to the confusion raised by their joint extravagance. She never was more herself, more gay, more unembarrassed, although Isaac Isaac did not appear, neither had the messenger come back, of course no message could be returned.

The blessing at length alighted where it had been so ardently expected, and Mr. Isaac Isaac was formally announced.

Whoever

Whoever has not seen this celebrated gentleman, might expect to hear, that the fallowness of his complexion and the reservedness of his manner, were the harbingers of his profession; on the contrary, Isaac Isaac had a Christian-like countenance, which held no alliance with his *unchristian* principles. His manners more resembled those of a courtier than a Levite—he pressed the offered hand of Sir Frederick, and bowed profoundly to Lady Isleworth, not like a man who retreats from, but one who flies to meet poverty in all its directions,

The desperate case of his disordered affairs being stated by Sir Frederick to his physician of finances, he shook his head, but the smile which sat on his features when he first entered remained unshaken.

A dead pause ensued!—Sir Frederick writhed with agony to know his fate, whilst Lady Isleworth talked incessantly of her ball, and of her daughter's marriage with Lord Clarence. At length Isaac Isaac broke the awful self-imposed silence, by mildly asking what he could do to serve them?

“Something must be done, by G—!” passionately exclaimed the Baronet, “to get rid of the d—d harpies that are lording it over *my* property.”

“As

"As to that, my dear," said her ladyship, "you are *not* singular; *other* people's valuables are in the same restraint with our *own*. I have as much borrowed plate for my evening gala as would pay the whole debt, and yet I dare say *my* friends are not in the least uneasy."

"What do you expect that I am to do for you?" repeated Isaac Isaac.

"Conclude the bargain you offered me the other day: pay down seven thousand pounds, and take the whole of my wife's property, which, when I shewed you the counter securities, you yourself valued at sixty thousand."

As Sir Frederick advanced in warmth, Isaac Isaac retreated with coolness; he was every steady to his word—but money was not to be got now at *any* price; seven thousand pounds was an immensity! he could not command it—it was impossible!

"I admit of *no* impossibilities!" thundered out the disappointed legislator of his country's laws and his country's independence, "I *MUST* have the money! and if, as you say, you *are* a man of your word, why you will get it for me, either from the bowels of the earth, or the bottom of the sea, provided it is not to be met with between *this* and *heaven*!"

"Consider

“Consider, my dear Sir,” said the mild *immovable* Israelite, “consider, before you determine so decidedly: *great* difficulties may be overcome, *but* not suddenly: for instance—suppose I cannot, by my *own* means, raise the sum you stand in need of, yet, if you are disposed to take the joint bonds of three noble guarantees for half the sum, the thing *may* be accommodated.

“I would first see you all to the devil!” cried Sir Frederick.

“There you are to blame,” said Lady Isleworth; “what man in his senses would desire *better* security?”

“What man, in his senses, would accept of *such* a security?” retorted Sir Frederick,

Again Isaac Isaac was silent—took out his watch—and looked toward the door.

CHAP. XXIX.

MORE OF THE SAME SORT.

SIR FREDERICK, starting from his chair, laid violent hands on his *prudent* guest, swearing by all the infernal deities, he should not escape, till he had carved a passage through the host of creditors, by paying the bailiff's demands, and kicking them out of the house !

Even Lady Isleworth, roused by the terrible alternative of *ball* or *no ball*, condescended to unite her efforts with those of her husband to detain him a little longer.

Isaac Isaac, thus beset, and by people of consequence, had too much politeness to take himself off with the abruptness he seemed to have intended ; he did more—he even listened complaisantly to their renewed proposal, of giving up sixty thousand pounds in reversion for the consideration of seven thousand in possession.

Who that had witnessed the gradual thaw pervading the frozen determinations of Isaac Isaac,

or

or the flush of exultation suddenly raised on the cadaverous cheeks of Sir Frederick, might not have supposed that the business would at last have been settled to their mutual satisfaction; but, alas! those who borrow, and those who lend, can be the only judges how many little delicacies may start up between the commencement and the conclusion of a bargain, to impede its progress.

Isaac Isaac asked Lady Isleworth, if she had never mortgaged, on similar occasions, *any* part of that property for which he was induced to treat, by the very great esteem he entertained for Sir Frederick, and the wish he had to get them out of their present unpleasant predicament, if such a thing was to be effected at any less price than his own ruination?

Her ladyship, instigated by folly, more than governed by honesty, might have made some unlucky blunder respecting her engagements to Bateman, if Sir Frederick had not prevented her reply by the most solemn asseverations, that his wife's independent property was entirely free from incumbrances of every kind, except the d—d weighty one of having it under the guardianship of two close-fisted dunder-headed fellows, whose teeth he might as easily draw from

from their mouth as his wife's money from their purse!

"I should like to see and talk with these guardians," said the cautious Isaac Isaac.

"I told you, when last we spoke upon the subject," cried the Baronet, impatiently, "that you could *not* see them, and that you must run all risks, in consideration of the prodigious premium."

"But, the hazard I shall run in obliging you, my good Sir Frederick—is not that too *prodigious*?"

"I aver there is no risk!" retorted Sir Frederick.

"Perhaps there is not; but my ideas of reputation are extremely nice—wonderfully delicate! I cannot afford to lend my money without interest; and if I ask in proportion to the chances against me, there is no reason why I should not be satisfied, that no part of the property so purchased has been purloined or embezzled: therefore, Sir Frederick, I must either speak with her ladyship's trustees, or decline the negociation."

"Would

"Would you shew yourself an usurer—an extortioner?" cried the enraged Baronet, raising his voice to a frightful pitch of energy: "Isaac Isaac, remember I tell you, that these muck-worms, instead of answering questions, would bring an action against thee."

"I defy them," said the cunning Isaac; "I know how to secure my own safety; and when I have spoken with them, the bargain, if you please, shall be completed."

Neither Sir Frederick or his lady would agree to this proposition; *he*, because convinced it must entirely do him up with Curry—and *she*, for reasons already known to the reader, who cannot have forgotten the secret money transactions which, for so many years, had been passing between her and Bateman.

Again Isaac Isaac applied to his watch—pleaded an engagement—said he would reconsider the affair—wait on them the next day, if he should be fortunate enough to strike out any other method to secure himself for so capital a sum as seven thousand pounds—bowed with the profoundest respect—and took himself off, without allowing them time to consider by what means it might be possible to stop his progress.

Sir

Sir Frederick's face, at this disappointment of his last forlorn hope, like the rainbow, exhibited all manner of colours. Foaming with rage, he ordered Lady Isleworth to prepare for the country, where he was determined to take an house under twenty pounds a year—make milliners of his daughters—and leave the devil to manage the rest of his affairs, for that the devil himself could only disentangle them!

Instead of being discomposed, her ladyship treated his threats with as much indulgence as if it had been a *bon mot* of her own making; she laughed immoderately, and very wittily observed, *that*, in such a case, he must be his *own* house-keeper, charging him to take good care of himself and his children, as she should certainly reside with Arthur and his adorable Lady Ann.

The questionable manner in which Isaac Isaac had withdrawn himself, left still a possibility that he might return again, the only reason in the world which would have prevented Sir Frederick from lifting his hand against the untimely jester; but, policy once more getting the better of his choler, he only asked, with a sneer—

“And how are you to live with your *adorable* Lady Ann?—a pennyless extravagant jilt!”

“Oh!

"Oh! stop your profane tongue!—I can not bear to hear my daughter, the dearest of my friends, thus abused!"

"But how, I say, are you to live with Arthur, who has not a guinea to support himself?"

"Like other people, no better off than ourselves. Lady Elizabeth Lovat offers me fifty guineas a week to establish her bank at my house with *petit soupés*, a repast by no means expensive, when one has *proper* servants about one; which, together with our *gains*, for I am the luckiest creature in the world at *faro*, and my share of your property, will do mighty well; so let me have my ball to-night, and to-morrow we shall arrange every thing."

Sir Frederick asked, with a grin and a whistle, with what part of his possessions she would be contented?

"The half of them, undoubtedly!" she replied.

"Be it so," cried the Baronet, "and by G— you shall have the largest half! for I will make over to your Ladyship all my debts, and keep the *nothing* which remains to myself."

The

The pleasant raillery that was forcing its way through the poisonous rancour of disappointment, distress, and displeasure, was suddenly interrupted by a violent pushing against the door on the outside, which the voice of Lady Ann could only have persuaded them was *not* intended as a forcible entry by a creditor, or some such hostile visitor.

CHAP. XXX.

THE ART OF MAKING A LITTLE MONEY GO A GREAT WAY.

“COME along, thou brute! thou grim devil, come along!” cried Lady Ann, entering the room, and trying to drag after her an extraordinary large Newfoundland dog, with half a dozen yards of blue ribbon tied round his throat, his shaggy coat covered with dirt, and her ladyship draggled to the knees.

“What is the meaning of all this uproar, Madam?” angrily, asked Sir Frederick, “what makes,

makes you bring that monstrous beast into my apartment?"

"Dear *pa-pa!* have patience, and I will tell you our history by and bye; but first, my pretty *ma-ma!* lend me five guineas, to pay the nasty fellow from whom I bought my *beautiful* Diver;—it is the cheapest purchase I ever made in my life!"

"Then I wish," said the Baronet, with acrimony, "your ladyship would have the goodness to pay for those kind of *cheap* purchases, when you are inclined to make them."

"Certainly I should have paid for the *charmer*, but Arthur has got all my money: I had only six shillings in my purse, and those I laid out on this collar.—Don't you think it is fancifully tied up?"

Lady Isleworth only said "Poor thing!" but looked delighted—Sir Frederick stamped his foot with violence on the floor, and stammered out, "This is too much, by G—!"

"Come, pray let me have the five guineas, that I may send him away!"

"Zounds!" cried her half suffocated father-in-law, "give him his dog again! I *will* not, and my wife *shall* not pay for it!"

"Then

“ Then I will make Arthur sell his reversion to the Jews : it is time he should do so, when you, Sir, refuse to supply me with common necessities. I *can* not, nor I *will* not live, without my angelic Diver ! ”

“Pray, my dear,” remarked the elated matron of the ruined premises, “if you think Arthur *must* sell his reversion, let it be to his father, and let him make his own terms with the Jews; for these sort of people, though extremely accommodating, are also extremely imposing upon young folks, when first they begin the world.”

“It is exactly the same to me who has it,” replied her ladyship, “but I will *not* send away Diver!”

“No, certainly!” cried her well-appropriated mother-in-law: “You must not regard what Sir Frederick says: something has happened to disturb his spirits, but we shall soon bring him into good humour.” Then, presenting her purse, begged she would take out the *paltry* five guineas and discharge her claimant: which having done, Lady Ann put what remained of its contents into her own pocket, *sans ceremonie*.

“ My dear ! ” emphatically exclaimed its right owner, as if to remind the giddy creature the

VOL. L purse

purse had mistaken its way—"My dear!"—her hand extended to receive it back, and her eyes watching when she should see it re-produced.

"Well, my *pretty mama*, what would you have?"

"My purse, if you please, enchantress!"

"Ah! I can no more part from *that* than I could part with Diver! Have I not told you Arthur has taken all *my* money? I will only keep it till he has sold his inheritance, or till you can supply all our wants. Arthur says he wants cravats, stockings, and handkerchiefs—I want an opera-box—I want to punt at faro—I want a bloodhorse to carry me—and I want four or six milk-white ponies to draw me through Hyde-park."

"Well, well, sweet trifler! consider not only *my* purse, but *all* that I possess, as your own! And now, say how you have employed yourself this long, and, to *me*, I am sure, mighty disagreeable morning?"

Sir Frederick, as well as his lady, had imbibed some distant hope, that by making Lady Ann the tool of their contrivance, Arthur might be prevailed on to cut off an entail, so inconvenient
in

in the present situation of affairs; and the moment she mentioned that he *should* sell his reversion, he had retired, almost unobserved, to ruminate at large on calculations, chances, and probabilities, as well as to keep himself from flying into fresh paroxysms of passion, which might be detrimental to his plans on the independence of his son Arthur, but which he could not restrain in her provoking presence.

To the question of how she had been employing herself? Lady Ann, with rather less effrontery than usual, owing, perhaps, to the recollection of *certain* circumstances, replied, "she had been strolling in the Park."

"What! in such gloomy weather! and without attendants, when there were so many idle footmen who had no earthly thing to do in the family!"

"Oh! she could not endure the formality of being followed! When living with her father," she said, "it was always her custom to ramble alone at all hours—was *often* accosted, but *never* frightened. Do you know," added she, "that the first time I ever in my life saw Arthur, he picked me up, not twenty yards from my door!"

"That was extremely singular!" observed Lady Isleworth, "and extremely fortunate!—I dote on love at first sight!"

"For Heaven's sake! Lady Isleworth, how can you entertain so absurd, so ridiculous a supposition? I love Arthur at *first* sight! Not I, indeed! neither at the second—third—fourth! or, in short, at any sight at all!"

"Well, that is surprising! And yet your Ladyship had the condescension to marry him!"

"O yes, I married Arthur! because, at the moment he asked me, I had no other SERIOUS lover, and because I wanted an establishment of my own."

And, that you have chosen to fix it in *my* family," said the simpering fantastical mother of Arthur, "is an honour of which I am mighty proud: we think so much alike that we shall be immensely comfortable. Has your Ladyship seen any thing of Clarissa this morning?"

"I saw her only pass along the street two hours ago, in a hackney coach, driving furiously."

"My daughter!—Miss Isleworth!—the future Countess of Clarence!—in a *hackney coach*, and driving *furiously*!" screamed Lady Isleworth
—"Lady

—“Lady Ann, you must have been mistaken! —the thing is altogether impossible!”

“No, no, I am not mistaken! Clarence saw her as well as me!—I met him in my stroll to the Park, when we took it into our heads to eat ice at a fruit-shop, just by Charing-cross; so that we had a full view of her, though she did not see us, but looked terribly solemn; and Clarence would have it that she was crying, because she held a handkerchief to her eyes.”

Lady Isleworth, still incredulous, would not credit the report, till she had sent for and questioned Clarissa's maid, who could not refuse to acknowledge that her mistress did go out at the time specified, *and* in a hackney coach.

“The girl has certainly eloped!” exclaimed Lady Isleworth, forgetting that she spoke thus freely of her daughter's character in the presence of a servant, “and *my* doors shall be shut to her for ever!”

“No! *That*, cried Lady Ann, “is *so* like my queer lord and father, that, should you repeat *his* odious words any more, I shall positively run away from you as I did from him—
get

get a divorce—and marry into a less flinty-hearted family.”

Ursula ventured to speak in defence of her young lady.—Where she was gone was not in her power to say, but was ready to swear, if her ladyship thought proper, that she was gone for *no* harm—that there was *no* gentleman in the case—that it was terror at the bailiff’s coming into the house, *and* not love which had driven her out of it.”

Truth so cunningly arranges her arguments, and her language is so nicely adapted to *all* capacities, that it will force conviction, on the foolish as well as the wise. Even Lady Isleworth was convinced no *great* harm had happened. Clarissa was acquitted of every intentional *crime*, but that of the *hackney coach*; and Mrs. Ursula dismissed, to go wherever *she* pleased—either to the room of *restraint*, to her own room, or to the house-keeper’s room, where all her fellow servants had collected together, talking over family affairs, and laying bets with each other, to be paid when their wages were settled, whether the ball would go on? whether, if it did, any body would come to it? and whether, after
such

such a blow up, their young lady would ever be Countess of Clarence!

CHAP. XXXI.

A SHORT END TO A LONG STORY.

“WHAT extravagant whims possesses this girl!” cried Lady Isleworth, in a voice of pique, as Ursula shut the door after her. “Well, I shall rejoice when Lord Clarence has taken her off my hands!” The pains it has cost me to make her like *other* young women have been all thrown away!”

“Oh dear! I would not have you set your heart too much on Clarence; to my *certain* knowledge, he is at this present moment engrossed by another attachment.”

“Not a serious one, I hope?”

“What

“What in these sort of matters deserves to be called serious?—I have heard he has a *mistress*, and that he loves her *passionately*.

“If it be only a mistress,” gravely remarked this *prudent caterer* for the happiness of an innocent daughter, “and if *this* mistress should happen to be already married, what possible objection could that be to Clarissa’s acceptance of his *honourable* proposals? *All* men of fashion do the same, either before or after they have made their domestic arrangements.”

Lady Ann seemed inclined to drop the argument, and began talking of the execution and the ball; which she so happily blended together as to make it plainly appear, that one *must* be the consequence of the other, because it happened just the same to three of her most intimate friends. Lady W—— Rashly, Lady Everbloom, and the Duchess of Davercheek, *would* carry *their* balls, although the executions were sent into their houses only two hours before its commencement.—She was at every one of them—never saw any thing better kept up, or spent three evenings so pleasantly in the whole course of her life.”

The

The eyes of Lady Isleworth flashed satisfaction; but, before her tongue had time to confirm it, she was informed that a gentleman desired to speak with Sir Frederick.

"Is it the same who went away some minutes ago?" meaning Isaac. Isaac, asked her ladyship.

"I believe not, my Lady," replied the servant.

"Very well, shew him to Sir Frederick's study.—I suppose he comes on business, and I have nothing to do with business.

CHAP. XXXII.

THE COMFORTS OF A BRITISH MERCHANT
OPPOSITE TO THE DISCOMFORTS OF A
BRITISH SENATOR.

HOWEVER strange it may appear to assert, that these emotions which are well known to be the destruction of female nerves, should, from their *very* violence, assist to support the spirits on which they unexpectedly seize, yet it is not the less true, that despair does sometimes, if not always, support itself by its own energy.

Clarissa would certainly have fainted under her woes, on her way to the merchant's house in Broad-street, but for the extreme agitation of thinking how it might be possible to extricate her imprudent parents from their miserable involvements.—He may be gone to the country—he may be on 'Change—or, if she should see him, for her sake would Mr. Curry come forward to their relief?—or, was it not *more* likely he should refuse to assist them?

Between

Between hopes and fears her poor mind was so tossed about, that nothing like insensibility could get admittance to her struggling bosom, till told by a servant, who answered the coachman's knock, that his master was at home, when a death-like calm took possession of her senses; she was forced to be lifted out of the carriage, and carried, rather than supported, to the awful presence of her best benefactor, to whose arms she had so often flown as to those of a tender father, but from which she would now have given worlds to retract; from a delicate consciousness, that a forced communication with a dissipated world had made her less worthy of his approbation, than when she climbed his knees to claim the paternal kiss, before her infant manners were contaminated by its affectation or its follies.

Mrs. St. Edmonds had that day invited herself to breakfast with her brother in the city. They had left their pleasant retirement at Enfield Chace together, about eight o'clock; they had already finished their second repast; and Mrs. St. Edmonds's carriage was waiting to convey her to the bank, and from thence to several shops, where she had purchases to make—when, turning her head towards the door, she
 behold

beheld within it the ematiated figure of Clarissa, sustained on either side by one of her own, and one of her brother's domestics.

“ Good God !” she cried, is it possible than an *angel* should be thus suffering under human infirmities !”

The worthy the godlike Curry, whose eye had been directed towards the same object, either by the *presentiment* of his *own* feelings, or by the beginning of his sister's exclamation, had started from his chair, caught the beautiful phantom to his heart, from which she was sinking upon the floor, when Mrs. St. Edmond's, with astonishment equal to what he testified, soon informed herself of the truth, and aided him, with the most eager tenderness, to raise the beautiful suppliant, to comfort, and encourage her.

It is not every description of comforters that must flatter themselves with the same expectation of success which attended the endeavours of those amiable relatives, to whom Clarissa, the moment Mrs. St. Edmond's was announced by her brother, confessed the whole of her family's involvements, adding, as well as tears and sobs
would

would admit, "that she was the most miserable of created beings!—that if her parents, by *no* other means, could be saved from destruction, she would announce her own sentence of perpetual suffering, and become the wife of Lord Clarence!"

"I thought, by the account I received from your father," said the beneficent merchant, "my beloved Clarissa! that the attachment between you and Lord Clarence had been mutual?"

"Ah! no—no—no!" she replied with quickness, "believe it not! he is my aversion, my detestation! It is only to save my father from a prison—my mother from poverty—my sisters from beggary—that I will ever consent to unite myself with a man so every way hateful to me as Lord Clarence!"

"I am glad I know your sentiments on this head," said Curry, evidently well pleased with her decision; "and now, sister, tell me what we shall do for this dear girl!"

"All—*every* thing that can be done!" she replied, with avidity! "too much cannot be done for a being so amiable, so interesting, so unprotected!"

unprotected!—follow the dictates of your own generous heart, and any other advice will be superfluous!”

“ Ah! do not think of *me*!” cried Clarissa, “ I have not deserved this kindness! Leave *me* to my fate!—What you *can* or *will* do, let it be for my father! You never saw such wretches as are got into the house! I passed by them—their looks were terrible!”

“ Say no more, my good child!” said the merchant, averting his face, to conceal the tears her tenderness had drawn from his humane heart: “ Go to Enfield Chace with my sister; she will take you under her maternal charge, whilst I am doing the needful for your father; and if half my fortune can give you back your peace of mind, when I join you in the evening you shall have nothing to lament.”

She cast herself at his feet, in agonies of joy, too great for utterance. Mrs. St. Edmond’s caught the soft infection of sympathy—passionately embraced her lovely charge, addressing her by the affectionate epithets of “ darling Clarissa!—daughter of my voluntary adoption!” She hastened her brother to depart on his errand
of

of mercy: a coach was called—he threw himself into it. And soon after, when a little refreshment had been forced upon Clarissa, Mrs. St. Edmond's, having given up her intentions of shopping, carried off her fair companion, nothing loath, from scenes of error, riot, and confusion, to the calm residence of rectitude—the cradle of peace—the abode of harmony.

At the beginning of this history, it may be remembered, Lady Isleworth expressed to Sir Frederick some fretful observations on the declining looks of her daughter, attended by a threat of sending her into the country, by way of punishing her obstinacy for refusing to put on *rouge*. Now, had she followed up those intentions, however severe her motives, the effects could not but have been highly favourable to a naturally delicate constitution, debilitated by mid-day beds of down, and mid-night revels of voluptuous pleasures.

Every body but the father, mother, and giddy inmates of their family, saw, with compassion, this broken lily, daily drooping its sweet head towards the common mother of all, as if to seek in her bosom the repose which her more unnatural mother would not allow her to indulge.

Clarissa

Clarissa did not complain—for, had she done so, who was there at leisure to listen? Not Lady Isleworth! Her time, always occupied about *nothing*, admitted no space to the intrusion of *disagreeable* subjects!—No Sir Frederick! because he left the management of his children entirely to their *mother*!—Not Arthur; he was never at home!—Not his wife; she thought of no body but Lord Clarence!—Not Lord Clarence; he now could think only of the divine Lady Ann! Friendship alone could open its ears and its eyes to the ravages of indisposition so visible on the countenance of Miss Isleworth.

The petrifying shock experienced by Mr. Curry as she entered his dining-room determined him, unauthorised, to send her out of town; full of the sanguine hopes, that the decline she was threatened with might yet be checked, by wholesome air, gentle exercise, early hours, and and asses' milk.

CHAP. XXXIII.

A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND INDEED.

MY well-informed readers, who are deeply conversant in these sort of anti-scientific compositions, who can at one glance anticipate all the plans of their author, which have cost him many an hour's labour of the mind to render incomprehensible, will find themselves at no loss to discover, that the gentleman whose visit was announced at the end of the thirty-first chapter, could be no other than the benevolent merchant of Broad-street.

Sir Frederick started at the sight of Curry, as if he had seen one rise from the dead to tell him that his own hour was come!—he felt a pang even worse than such a command would probably have created, because the present world was just then particularly disagreeable to his feelings, and of a future world he had not the smallest conception. He might therefore, rather than otherwise, have thought it advantageous
to

to settle at once with his creditors, by going to sleep *everlastingly*.

In the whole catalogue of those *fair* and *goodly* creatures to which his vices, his follies, and his extravagancies, had given existence, there was not one he was less desirous to hold converse with than the gentleman now before him, and to whom he offered his hand with much seeming cordiality.

“ I understand, Sir,” said the merchant, more abashed for the senator than the senator was for himself, as it happens in many similar instances, that innocence shews upon her own cheek those colours which ought to veil the face of guilt, speaking, as it were, in these words: “ *You are incapable of blushing in your own cause—it is, therefore, that I blush for you.*”
——“ I understand, Sir, your affairs—pardon me—are considerably embarrassed.”

“ They are ! and I do not care a damn who knows it ! I have now as many bailiffs in my house as would stock a county !”

The merchant shook his head.

“ Lookye, Mr. Curry; *I* know you are come for your money, and *you* know I have it not to pay

pay—my person you cannot touch, and my goods are already restrained for more than they are worth—so where is your remedy?”

“ Good God! Sir Frederick, are you speaking in this tone of raillery to the man who wishes to serve you, who is come to offer you his services !”

A remonstrance so mild, so unexpected, so full of promise, excited effects which all the reproaches that could have been uttered would have failed to produce—it caused Sir Frederick to look pleased, and it *forced* him to blush !

“ Give me your hand, Curry!—there is not, I swear,” cried he, an honefter fellow, or a more friendly man than thyself, in the British dominions! My suspicions have wronged your noble sentiments!—pardon the injury, at least excuse it! for, to tell you the truth, there are so many cursed duns coming about me, that when I only look a man in the face, I expect to hear him call out—*When will you pay me my money !*”

The man of business, summoned by the man of pleasure to surrender his hand at the beginning, withdrew it again just as his speech was concluded, almost repenting the desperate undertaking

taking which he had volunteered; but the thoughts of Clarissa—her bodily disease—her fatigued spirits—and distracted mind, for which there appeared no other remedy than to remove her parents out of their difficulties, made him most humanely persevere in his first purpose; and he asked Sir Frederick, though with some abatement of his original warmth, “whether he could propose any means of extricating himself, in which his assistance might be found useful?”

“There were two ways of serving him,” he replied, “either of which would do very well.”

He was desired to name them.

“Will you resign your trust for my wife, and make Bateman give up his? It would effectually save the whole race of us from perdition!”

“Sir, you already know my *determination* on that head!—pass on, if you please, to the alternative.”

Here was one of the Baronet's *best* hopes defeated; having conceived it very possible that, in the present state of affairs, and with Curry's
evidently

evidently generous intentions, he would certainly find less difficulty in giving up the property of *another*, than in laying down his *own*, to the uses of philanthropy. But, finding his first proposition so ill received, he entered on the last, and, as he thought, the most *unlikely* to succeed.

“ You know,” said he, “ Mr. Curry, I owe you two thousand pounds !”

“ Owe them to me still !—keep them, Sir, as long as it suits your convenience !”

“ I could not keep them, Mr. Curry—they are gone, some one way, some another ! When a man is so incumbered by his family as I am, he is not able to tell *how* his money goes.”—He paused, unknowing what to say next—the ice was thawed, but not broken.

“ I wait your commands, Sir Frederick,” said the merchant,

“ Gad, that is true !—I was lost in the contemplation of your kindness, and my own damn’d necessities ?—to extend the one and silence the other, I wish you would rid me of my Westmoreland estate !”

“ Is

"Is Lady Bridges Isleworth dead?" asked the merchant."

"The devil a bit of mortality," cried the Baronet, "was infused into her iron ribs! You know, when he had got her almost under ground, what a damn'd trick she played me!—how she started up, like a Dutch tumbler, from the undertaker's gripe! I would ensure her death, if I could, at *any* expence: but, as I know of no office that would grant me a *policy*, dear Curry, if you really mean to serve me, and will take my estate—damn me!—do it for the work's *fake*, and with no view to *survivorship*! Methusela himself would have been beat hollow, in a race with that eternal old woman!"

"Pardon me, Sir," replied Curry, to this frothy, frivolous address, "I am a plain man, unlettered in modern politeness; and therefore must confess I do not clearly comprehend what may be the *extent* of your proposals.—Be so good to inform me, if you mean that it is your desire I should purchase the reversion of your Westmoreland estate?"

CHAP. XXXIV.

IN WHICH THE BARGAIN PROCEEDS.

“MY very meaning, by G—!” cried Sir Frederick: “And, being persuaded that my aunt Bridget is determined to keep *her* holding till the day of judgment, I will let you have it at half price!—pay me down fifteen thousand, and the Westmoreland estate is your own!”

Such an offer, made by any other body but a *maniac*, would have filled the prudent merchant with astonishment. But, having long considered Sir Frederick, as well as his appendages (Clarissa excepted), amongst that half-mad class who run about at large, doing mischief in the world, because they are independent of all but their *creditors*, and because no body has the power or inclination to restrain them; being also assured, that he might now make whatever terms he pleased, he rather advanced to meet, than retreated from the Baronet’s ill-digested proposition.

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“The price which I was to have paid was thirty thousand pounds, when you thought her ladyship——”

“Stop!” cried Sir Frederick, “not a word, if you please, of *that* cursed business! I am frenzical when I think *how* she served me! Had she died *then*, I would have forgiven her for having lived before beyond the bounds of calculation!”

Curry waited, with extreme patience, till the passionate apostrophe was ended, and then calmly resumed his subject.—“What I was, at our former negotiation, ready to lay down, I am still willing to give; not that I will possess the estate on *your* terms, but must have it on my *own*. Thirteen thousand pounds shall be yours, as soon as the writings can be drawn; which, with the two already advanced, is just half the purchase money—the other half shall be paid on demise of the present incumbent.—Are you satisfied, Sir Frederick?”

“Satisfied to be sure I am! What man would not be satisfied, to meet with a purchaser who generously gives him ^{twice} as much as he has asked?—Curry, I am ever thy debtor:—upon
my

my soul I am ! But, whilst the cursed lounging lawyers are playing with my impatience, by their long form of words without meaning, what is to become of me, surrounded as I am by their myrmidons ?”

Uninformed for what sum the execution had taken place, because Clarissa did not herself know the amount, Mr. Curry considerably stopped at his banker's, and filled his pocket-book with bank-notes, to the tune of ten thousand pounds, resolved, at all events, to relieve the father of his amiable favourite.

In answer to Sir Frederick's doleful question, of what would become of him between the commencement and consummation of his dawning prosperity ? he was assured by his deliverer, that the sheriffs officers should be dismissed before he quitted the house : nor did he retract from his word, when he understood that their demand was for seven thousand pounds, on the single article of carriages ! The sum, though large, was rather below than above the expectations on which he had calculated, taking for his estimate the coalescence of Sir Frederick and Lady Isleworth's pre-eminent knowledge in the art of squandering !

A promise so exhilarating, acted on the agitated brain of Sir Frederick as strong liquors are apt to do on weak heads; and, intoxicated with joy, he ventured to promise, what any man but the man he had to deal with would have knocked him down for proposing—it was no less, than to pay down the *whole* purchase-money in hand! forgetting his *old* creed of Lady Bridget's *material* immortality; for, says he—

“My good friend! as money, I conceive, by your liberality, can be to you of very little consequence, if you would oblige me, your statue should be erected in my hall, under the semblance of Jupiter Ammon!”

“Rather say of Midas, the *fool*,” interrupted Curry, with a good natured smile, not calculated to reproach or dishearten the eloquent pleader, who, bronzed by the hand of fashion, and more ready to adopt the smile *than* the rebuke which raised it, proceeded, in his no very modest petition, with renovated energy.

“Well, have it your own way, my honest fellow! I will place your statue in my hall or my heart by any figure you like!—I will give you any sum—I will enter into any engagements!—

only

only advance me the other fifteen, that I may carry my borough, pay my debts, and live at my ease !”

“As long as you *can*, I presume,” said the merchant dryly.

“True !—true !—just so, Mr. Curry ! But, have you the goodness to comply with my earnest solicitations ?”

Curry had a game to play, as well as the Baronet ; and the one resigned his chance with as much gratification as the other seized on it with avidity, on two conditions—first, that Clarissa should be released from the addresses of Lord Clarence, if her heart revolted at the alliance ; and secondly, having first passed some weeks at his villa, she be allowed to accompany his sister to the continent, or elsewhere, for as long a time as the faculty might think a change of climate or place necessary to the restoration of Mrs. St. Edmonds’s debilitated constitution.

“We are now,” said the merchant, “beginning to grow serious, and in bargains of this nature some form of agreement is always requisite : I have provided myself with proper in-

struments, which, by mutually signing, will ascertain our mutual security. From Miss Isleworth herself I learnt what are the present circumstances of your family; it was her tears—her tears of filial agony, which brought me to your relief; she is now at *my* house, under the protection of *my* sister, from whence you may command her to depart, by forfeiting your part of our existing agreement.

“I had,” continued he, producing two papers, “meant to have offered the very propositions which have been made by yourself, respecting the Westmoreland estate.—I therefore sketched out these memorandums, satisfactory to both parties, binding you and myself, in the forfeiture of ten thousand pounds, to either who shall daringly forfeit the honour with which he pledges to fulfil his engagements. My part is already properly signed; it therefore only remains that you should do the same, for which one witness will be necessary, and the bargain is concluded.”

Had the most generous of mankind, instead of placing Clarissa under the protection of a woman like Mrs. St. Edmonds, demanded her for the purposes of prostitution, Sir Frederick was now so dead to all feeling but that of selfish

fish luxury, he would have signed not only to the disgrace of his daughter, but to the perdition of his whole family.—A witness was necessary, and he rang the bell with violence.

CHAP. XXXV.

IN WHICH THE BARGAIN IS CONCLUDED.

THE servant who entered brought with him a note, which he delivered into the hands of his master, who, without looking at the superscription, asked him if he could write his name? to which being answered in the affirmative, he was commanded to take notice whilst Sir Frederick wrote his own, and then to witness that he had done so; which order having obeyed, as also noticed the form of impressing the seal with these words—"this I deliver as my act and deed,"—was instantly dismissed, with orders to send the sheriff's chief officer into the steward's room.

room, where a gentleman would give him audience, and settle the demands of his employer.

No sooner was the Baronet secured in all the privileges money alone can procure, and of which nothing but his own breach of contract could in future divest him, than, overwhelmed with his tide of good fortune, he began not only to feel that he should be less comfortable *with* than *without* the society of his *good* friend, but also to experience much *tender* curiosity to examine the contents of his billet, which a single glance had told him came from Mrs. Snug!—the faithless, yet still adored Mrs. Snug!

Human nature will ever be human nature, whether it be more or less perfect or imperfect. It was natural that the merchant should think he had quite enough of the baronet, as that the baronet should desire the absence of the merchant—for this simple reason, that the good and the evil, like oil and vinegar, can never by inclination assimilate together, though necessity and hard eggs may force them to a temporary union.

Just as the gentlemen were taking leave of each other, Lady Isleworth learned, by means of her woman, that the gentleman who had been so long with her master was Mr. Curry—that
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the bailiffs were going to be paid off by him, and turned out of the house.

Elate with intelligence so congenial to her wishes, she immediately dispatched her compliments with a message, requesting to see her guardian, determined, if what she had heard of his generosity was *really* true, to condescend a little in her turn, and to treat him with civility.

She had only time to make up her mind in what manner to receive him, when he undauntedly appeared before her, followed by Sir Frederick.

"I come, Madam," said he, "to receive your commands, otherwise should not have intruded to your Ladyship's dressing-room. Having settled the business with your husband which brought me, a *forbidden* guest, to *this* house, I have no spare moments to bestow on attentions that are not previously claimed.—You sent word you should be glad to see me; and the less time you require my attendance, the greater will be my obligation."

Lady Isleworth was going to answer him with spirit equal to his own; but Sir Frederick, eager to break up the ceremonious altercation, to
emancipate

emancipate himself and his friend, began to rehearse, as fast as he could utter, how much they were both indebted to Mr. Curry, and how much it behoved her ladyship to unite with him in returning their hearty acknowledgments.—“I am sure,” said he, “the devil would have flown away with me, if this, my better genius, had not snatched me from his infernal clutches!”

The merchant, either mortified at the evil name coupled with his good works—too modest to delight in his own praises—or fearful to encounter the rage of Lady Isleworth, should her husband proceed to the recitation of certain conditions, would instantly have made his escape; but she herself impeded his haste, by the gratefulness of her advances, and the graciousness, of her solicitations.

“Indeed, my dear Sir,” cried her ladyship, “since you have been so mighty obliging to Sir Frederick, you *must* not, nay, you *shall* not leave us, till you have heard what I have to say for myself.”

Curry, still on his feet, made his bows, but said nothing.

“Recollect how often you have heard my father declare, that I was the sweetest disposition
in

in the world!—and so I am, in every thing but *one*—I like to have my *own* way in the management of my *own* children.”

“ And finely they have been managed, by G—!” exclaimed the Baronet; “ in future I shall take the conduct of Clarissa to myself,” winking significantly to his colleague.

“ I believe we shall not have long to dispute on *that* subject,” replied her peaceably disposed ladyship, “ a few weeks, and another will supersede my authority as well as yours——Pray,” added she, exultingly, “ have you told my trustee what my cleverness has done for the establishment of Clarissa? who, being but a sort of milk and water composition, may think herself very well off to be a countess!”

Sir Frederick, who had been so anxiously looking forward to the same event, yet, having renounced it by his late engagement, would have imprecated a thousand curses on his own head, if the merchant’s penetrating eyes could have been prevailed upon to make their inquisitive researches in any other direction than over the surface of his changing countenance, whereon they dwelt with immoveable fixedness; and he only replied to his wife’s question—“ that
Mr.

Mr. Curry knew of Lord Clarence's pretensions."

"And an't you vastly happy?" cried she, "I am sure you must be most amazingly happy at Clarissa's good fortune!"

"I shall rejoice, indeed," said he, "when I hear, from her own declaration, that she has walked by choice, and not being dragged by authority, into the regions of felicity!"

"Only hear him, Sir Frederick!—still the same unfashionable ideas!—the same antediluvian notions!"

"Never, Madam, will you see me cast off my old principles, till you can convince me their substance is lost—that it is time I should get new ones; and also, that the new ones must be *modern*; when I shall be proud to consult your ladyship's taste in my choice, as the very best of its *kind* to which I can apply for directions!"

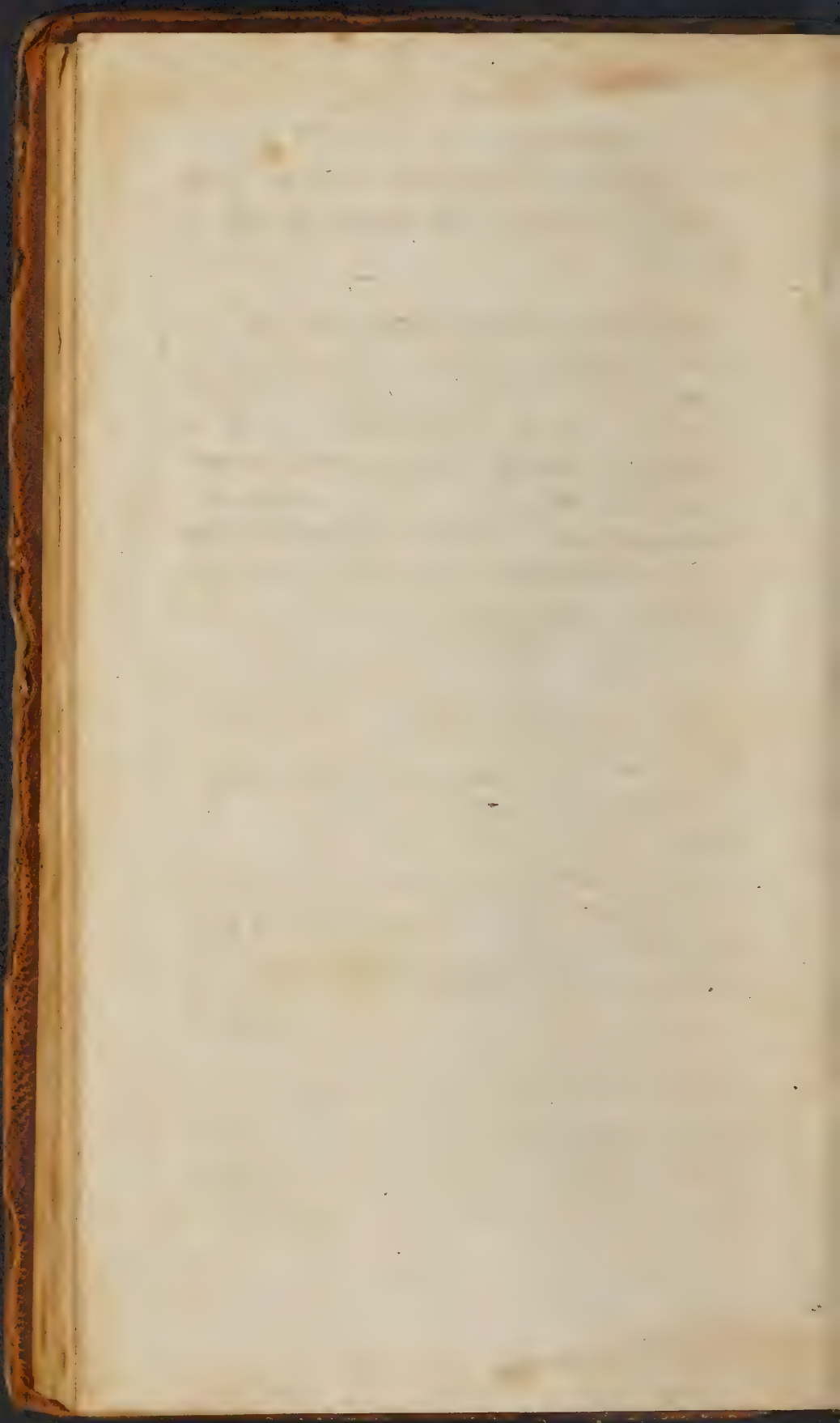
Swallowing the bait without perceiving the hook—that is to say, construing into a compliment what was meant as a censure, he seemed

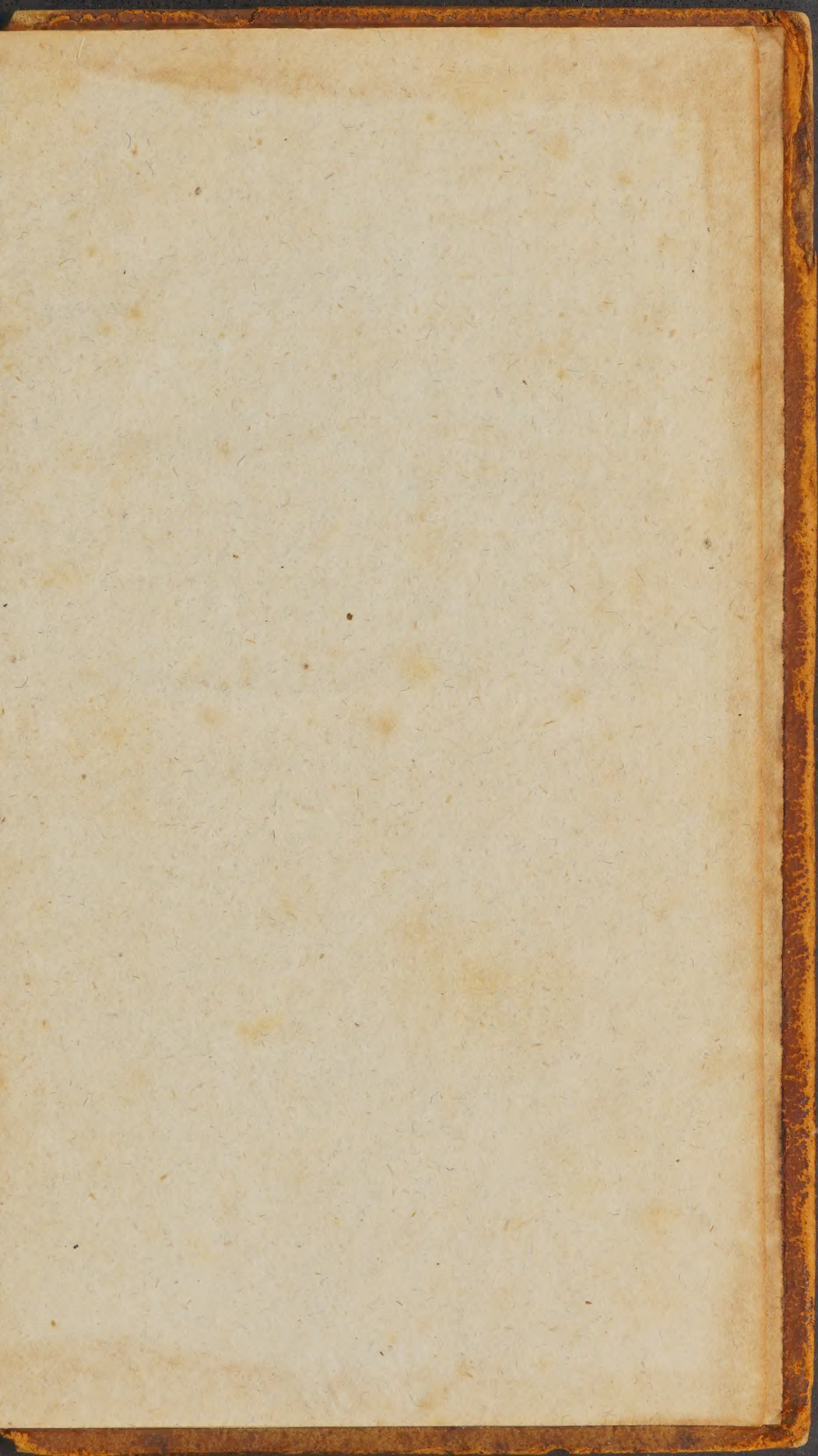
to.

to have entirely re-instated himself in her favour—she increased her civility—she increased her loquacity!

Sir Frederick every moment grew more and more impatient to examine the contents of his adorable Mrs. Snug's *billet-doux*, not so much from the violence of inclination, as from the violence of curiosity, of apology that dear perfidious could make, for an absence which, in so many attendant circumstances, exactly resembled an elopement with a young dashing sprig of quality, whose head ran upon the ladies, and his wheels on the four aces.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.





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